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INDIANA)

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Hamilton Retrospections

Foreward

"Hamilton Retrospections" is a combination of historical data from factual records and recollections of early residents of Hamilton. There are duplications , some inaccuracies and omissions, which are unavoidable. Early records are sketchy, memories sometimes cloudy, and it is impossible to recapture all the facts lost with the passing of the earlier generations.

Dedication

We dedicate this book to

Bob Swift

whose remarkable memory and eagerness to preserve his childhood memories for his descendants served as an inspiration to put together "Hamilton Retrospections".

by The Hamilton News Staff,

Margo Teegardin
Mary Weigus
Diana Parsell

June 30, 1983

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to the following people for their genuine interest and assistance in gathering material for "Hamilton Retrospections".

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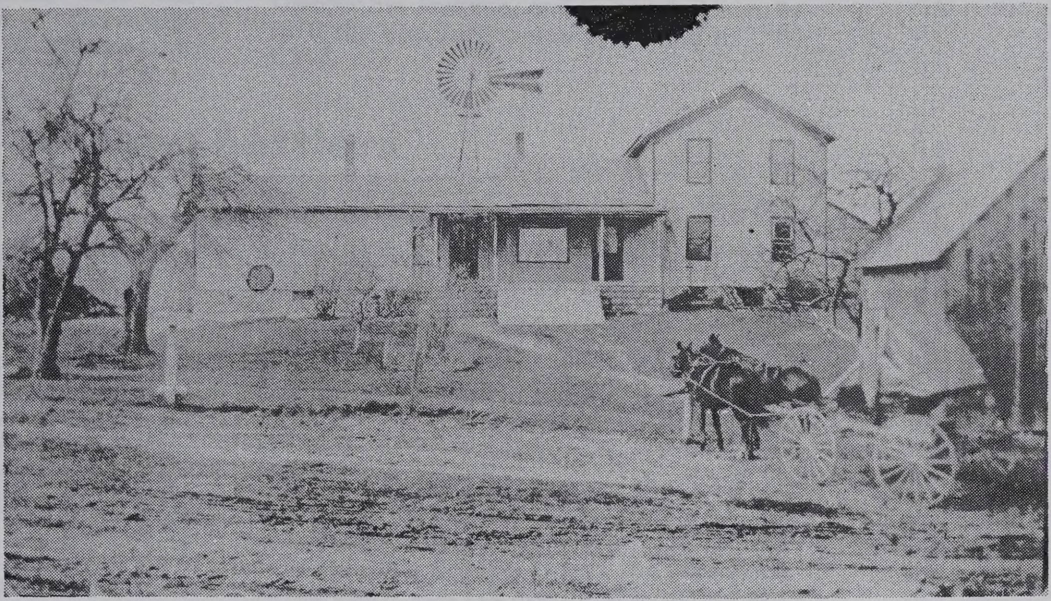
Lucy James
Alice Latier
Ives Mills
Elta Mortorff
Estella Myles
Judy Peel
Eloise Platter
June Preston
Leo Radcliff
Ed & Joan Sanxter
Mavis Sattison
Waldo Stout
Bob Swift
Mary Till
Paul Van Gundy
Martha Williamson

Early Settlers

Otsego Township's First Settlers

Otsego is bounded on the north by Scott, east by Richland, west by Steuben, south by DeKalb and is 23,000 acres. About 1000 acres are covered by water consisting of Fish Lake (Hamilton Lake), Ball Lake, Mud Spring Lake, Johnson Lake and Round Lake.

In "The History of Steuben County Indiana," compiled by Harvey W. Morley, Mrs. Blaine Willibey writes, "The first settler in Otsego Township was John Fee who came here in March of 1835, on the 13th day of March. He built the first house the same spring. He would take his grain to Maumee, Ohio, to have it milled. During the time he was gone, the Indians would come begging for food and steal everything they could get, especially Mrs. Fee's homemade soap. West of John Fee's old home there is an old Indian Cemetery. It is laid out in a triangle with a tree at each corner."



The Fee Homestead (now owned by Bob and Jean Howard).

John Fee

The following information from the "History of Indiana and Steuben County, Indiana" was submitted by Mavis Sattison:

John Fee, the first settler of Otsego Township, Steuben County, was born in Gallia County, Ohio, October 13, 1810. His father, William Fee, was a farmer, and to that avocation the son was reared and made it the successful pursuit of his life. He was nineteen years of age when his father with family settled in Williams County, Ohio. He had a family of twelve children, of whom John was the second child. William Fee, after making a little improvement and shelter for his family, went back for money to pay for his land and on his return was taken sick and died before reaching home, leaving the family in limited circumstances. John Fee and Mary A. B. Houlton were married April 9, 1833. She was born in Highland County, Ohio, April 9, 1811, a daughter of Samuel Houlton, one of the first settlers of Chillicothe, Ohio. At the time of their marriage Mrs. Fee was residing with her brothers, Samuel and John Houlton, in Williams County, Ohio. John Houlton settled in DeKalb County the same year and was the first settler of that county. Mr. and Mrs. Fee lived on Samuel Houlton's farm as renters until 1835, when they came to this township, being the first white family to make their home here, and located 120 acres on section 32. Mr. Fee was a man of great energy and force—the man for a new country. It gave him room, and brought into action his inherent force of character. He became one of the largest land owners in the county, at one time owned about 1,500 acres, not all in this county. His home farm on sections 32 and 33 and adjoining land over the line in DeKalb County, contained about 700 acres, now making several farms divided among his children. Mrs. Fee cooked and carried herself a dinner to the men employed in raising the first building ever erected in Hamilton. Nine children were born to them. Calvin; Clarind, wife of A. L. Nichols; Margaret R., wife of A. J. Carpenter; John; Ann, wife of L. T. Crain; William and Frank. Mr. Fee died April 2, 1873.

Otsego Settlers continued . . .

The next land purchasers in Otsego Township (after John Fee) were Elias O. Rose, who in July 1835 selected land in section 34 and Gideon Ball, who claimed several tracts in September 1835. After John Fee the next to make settlement were James Clark and his wife in June 1836 and James Johnson arrived in August of the same year. From then until 1840 the following settled in Otsego Township: James W. Jefferies, Henry R. Williams, A. Murray, Wm. C. Herrick, John Salisbury, J.H. Miner, Benedict Corey, J. Corey, Henry Coy, P. Clark, D. D. Robinson, George Swope, A. Gates, Edward C. Johnson, Jon Avery, George Quick, William Gilmore, C. Burch, Gideon Ball, Samuel Tuttle, Richard Jackman, John Haughey, John Laurence, Nicanor Munson, S.P. Gambia, C. Frink, Theophilus Jackson, and Henry Jackman. By 1870 the population was 1,318 and in 1880 1,347.

Otsego Settlers

by Bob Swift

Gideon Ball was the second settler in Otsego Township. He came here in September, 1835. John Fee preceded him in the spring. His land included most of Ball Lake and the lake is named after him. His cabin stood on the hill east of the drive from Bellefountain Road to the lake. My father was born in 1888 in the log cabin and used to point to the location when we drove by. The Ball family came here from New York state.

George W. Swift came to Otsego Township n 1836 from Massachusetts in an oxen pulled wagon. He owned land that started on the south at the Corbin school corner and went north on the east side of State Road 1 to the jog in the road.

George Swift's son Oscar married Gideon Ball's daughter Dema and they were the parents of my grandfather, Ora Swift. Ora Swift married Abie Husselman and were my father's parents.

When I was young, it seemed that we were related to one third of the people in our community. There were many Swifts and Fees but they gradually left the farms and moved away. The Fee and Swift families are the oldest families in continuous residence in Otsego Township.

Early Farming

Mrs. Blaine Willibey wrote in "Steuben County History" that the main crops of the ay in Otsego Township were corn and wheat. "In 1881, George H. Carpenter rected a building for the purpose and ecame established in the general mercantile business at Otsego Center and uilt up a good trade. He was also ostmaster of Oufa Post Office, appointed n 1881, the mail being brought from leasant Lake to Alvarado on Horseback, r horse and buggy when roads permitted"

In the "History of N.E. Indiana" farm roducts and Valuations for 1880 were listed:

(1) Acres of wheat 2963; average yield per acre, 19 bushels; total crop, 56,800 bushels.

(2) Acres of corn 2,196; average yield/acre, 31 bushels.

(3) Acres of oats 848; yield, 3 bushels/acre; total crop 25,400 bushels.

(4) Acres in Meadow, 887, yield of hay per acres, one and one fourth tons.

(5) Acres of Irish potatoes 124; yield per acre, 82 bushels.

In 1884 records show total valuation of personal and real property in Otsego township to be $983,130. The number of acres of land assessed was 212,281. It was assessed at $208,925.

The Onion Fields

by Bob Swift

My dad used to say, "I will clothe you and feed you and give you a place to stay. If you want to buy any junk, you will have to earn the money to pay for it." Believe me, if a kid earns the money he is very careful how it is spent.

A major crop in the twenties was onions so anyone who had a patch of muck raised onions.

Onions were planted in spring in narrow rows. If muck dries out it will blow so windbreaks had to be erected. Some drove stakes in the muck and fastened long strips of burlap to the stakes. Others would sow windrows of rye.

After the onions were up and about an inch high they would have to be weeded. Most Hamilton boys and some girls did this type of work. Muck would go through the knees of overalls and poison the skin. To prevent this strips of rubber inner tubes were sewn over the knees of the overalls.

The first thing that had to be done was work the patch with a scuffer. A scuffer is a hand garden plow with an L shaped blade. The short part was vertical and protected the onions. The long part was sharp and cut the weeds and cultivated. The kids would then get down on their hands and knees and crawl down the row pulling the weeds from around the onions. Nettles were a problem so we learned to dig under the plant to pull them out by the roots. Nettles sting and they hurt for a long time. Purslane is hard to kill and will root anywhere it touches the ground. We always carried it out of the patch. Onions had to be weeded twice. Kids were paid one dollar for a ten hour day.

After the onions matured they were pulled by hand and laid in the row to dry. When the tops were dry they were topped with sheep shears. Then is when we made the most money. If a boy started early and worked late, he could earn $2.50 to $3.00 a day. Toppers were paid by the crate so the number of hours worked was up to him.

After onions were topped they were graded for size. Slats placed at proper guage let undersize onions drop to a container below the grader. These were called soup onions. Graded onions were weighed, sacked and the bags were sewn shut.

Most of the crop was shipped as soon as possible. Onions were stacked two bags high in railroad box cars. In the first row bags were stood on end and on the second row they were layed flat. If they were stacked higher the bottom onions would bruise.

A car could not be shipped before being inspected for size, quality and weight. The easiest money I made was directing an inspector to railroad sidings.

A little worm called a thrip ruined the onion business. It would eat up the center of the plant and kill it.

Men I worked for were: Nub Oberlin, Asa Aldrich, Ford Kepler, Girt Gnagy and Wolf Brothers. I always enjoyed working for Ford and Marie Kepler. They lived on Walnut Street so I had to carry my lunch. We would eat under the shade trees next to the house. Marie would give us lemonade, milk, cookies and cake. All of the men I worked for were good to us and we always tried to do a good job for them.

First Settlers in Richland Township

The following history on Richland Township is an excerpt from "The History of Steuben County 1955."

Richland is in the southeastern corner of the county. It is bounded on the north by York Township, on the east by the state of Ohio, on the south by DeKalb County, Indiana, and on the west by Otsego Township, Steuben County... It has twelve full and six fractional sections, comprising 10,000 acres of very productive farming and grazing land.

There are no lakes in the township, but Fish Creek runs south through the entire length of the township.

John Douglas entered the first government land October 11, 1835. John Kerr and Robert Jackman entered land the same year, but Robert Jackman and family were the first settlers in the township, coming in 1836, and building a log cabin in the township, coming in 1836, and building a log cabin in the southwest quarter of section 30. Later in the same year Horatio E. Jordon settled in the township, and by the year 1840 there were about a dozen families settled here.

The first frame house in the township was built by Gera Goodale, who later moved to Scott Township...

At the corners of section 17, 18, 19 and 20 is what is known as Richland Center or Alvarado. For many years there was a post office, general store, and blacksmith shop near the corners. The first schoolhouse in the township was built of logs at Richland Center.

The first church built in the township was built at Richland Center in the year 1850 by the Methodists.

PRICE, 25 Cts
TO CURE THE GRIP IN ONE DAY
ANTI-GRIPINE
HAS NO EQUAL FOR HEADACHE
CURES COUGHS COLDS

ANTI-GRIPINE
IS GUARANTEED TO CURE
GRIP, BAD COLD, HEADACHE AND NEURALGIA.
I won't sell **Anti-Gripine** to a dealer who won't **Guarantee It.**
Call for your **MONEY BACK IF IT DOESN'T CURE.**
F. W. Diemer, M.D., Manufacturer. ***Springfield, Mo.***

First Physician

A mile north of Haughey's Corners is the frm settled by Levi Gates. And north of tere, at the end of the road, is Cass Sith's Corners, named for the son of bert Smith M.D. Dr. Smith was one of the erliest physicians to settle in the Otsego area. He traveled many miles on horseback through the forest to take care of the sick. This is according to Morley's history. In the 1920 "History of N.E. Indiana." Dr. Tuttle is recorded as the earliest physician.

Home entertainment with the Hagerty family.

Music

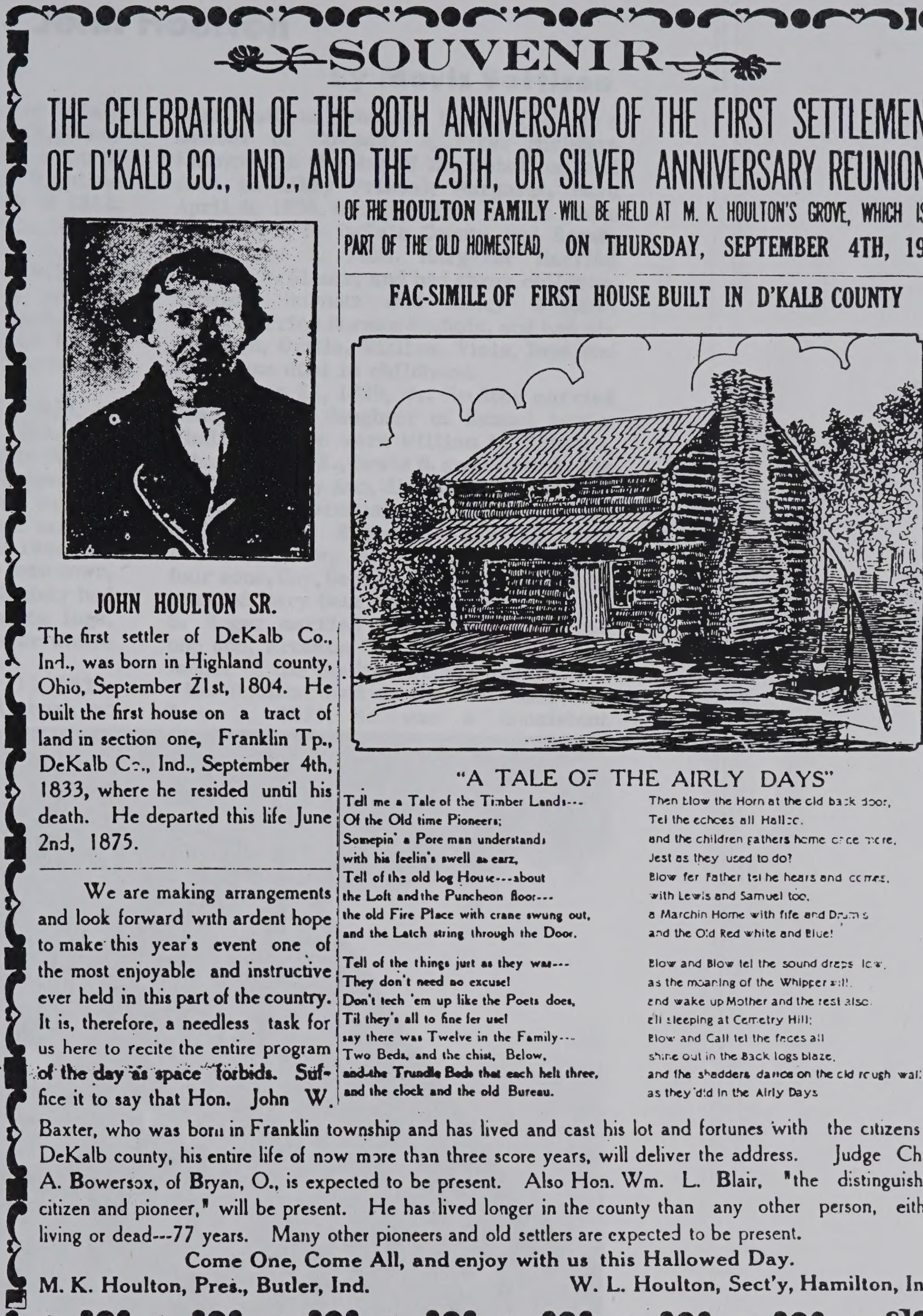
he first record of musical activity in ilton was in the 1860's. Charles A. ersox, then Hamilton school teacher, an the first singing school. The lents were taught to sing by notes and of the books he used was "Song Magic". later singing schools were conducted Mr. Fisher and Mr. Hartley. They held se classes at the Methodist Church ch was in the church building now upied by the Calvary Chapel.

llowing the singing schools were irs. The first choir leader in the munity was George Willenar, about).

e first instrumental band was anized about 1882 with John Gnagy as leader and Roger Houlton as instructor. Members of the band were: Guy Gnagy, George Gnagy, Henry Matthews, Bert Oberlin, Billy Beecher, Lewis Houlton and Luther Albright. In 1885, Ira Swift became the leader and two new members, Cyrus B. Dirrim and Mack Waller, were added.

Around 1905 an orchestra was formed with Ora Swift as leader. Some of the members were: Lydia Hammond, Clyde Sharp, Glen Gnagy and Ford Swift.

Among the early music teachers were: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Thomas, who taught piano and voice, and Claudia Bender, who taught piano. Also Beulah Cameron came from Edon to give piano lessons. Lottie B. Masters began teaching piano in 1910.



SOUVENIR

THE CELEBRATION OF THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST SETTLEMEN OF D'KALB CO., IND., AND THE 25TH, OR SILVER ANNIVERSARY REUNION

OF THE HOULTON FAMILY WILL BE HELD AT M. K. HOULTON'S GROVE, WHICH I PART OF THE OLD HOMESTEAD, ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH, 19

FAC-SIMILE OF FIRST HOUSE BUILT IN D'KALB COUNTY

JOHN HOULTON SR.

The first settler of DeKalb Co., Ind., was born in Highland county, Ohio, September 21st, 1804. He built the first house on a tract of land in section one, Franklin Tp., DeKalb Co., Ind., September 4th, 1833, where he resided until his death. He departed this life June 2nd, 1875.

We are making arrangements and look forward with ardent hope to make this year's event one of the most enjoyable and instructive ever held in this part of the country. It is, therefore, a needless task for us here to recite the entire program of the day as space forbids. Suffice it to say that Hon. John W. Baxter, who was born in Franklin township and has lived and cast his lot and fortunes with the citizens DeKalb county, his entire life of now more than three score years, will deliver the address. Judge Ch A. Bowersox, of Bryan, O., is expected to be present. Also Hon. Wm. L. Blair, "the distinguish citizen and pioneer," will be present. He has lived longer in the county than any other person, eith living or dead---77 years. Many other pioneers and old settlers are expected to be present.

"A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS"

Tell me a Tale of the Timber Lands---
Of the Old time Pioneers;
Somepin' a Pore man understands
with his feelin's swell as earz,
Tell of the old log House---about
the Loft and the Puncheon floor---
the old Fire Place with crane swung out,
and the Latch string through the Door.

Tell of the things just as they was---
They don't need no excuse!
Don't tech 'em up like the Poets does,
Til they's all to fine fer use!
say there was Twelve in the Family---
Two Beds, and the chist, Below,
and the Trundle Beds that each helt three,
and the clock and the old Bureau.

Then blow the Horn at the old back door,
Tel the echoes all Halloo.
and the children gathers home once more,
Jest as they used to do?
Blow fer Father tel he hears and comes,
with Lewis and Samuel too,
a Marchin Home with fife and Drums
and the Old Red white and Blue!

Blow and Blow tel the sound drops low,
as the moaning of the Whipper will,
and wake up Mother and the rest also
all sleeping at Cemetry Hill;
Blow and Call tel the faces all
shine out in the Back logs blaze,
and the shadders dance on the old rough wal
as they did in the Airly Days

Come One, Come All, and enjoy with us this Hallowed Day.

M. K. Houlton, Pres., Butler, Ind. **W. L. Houlton, Sect'y, Hamilton, In**

Above is a replica of a souvenir of the Houlton family's 25th anniversary reunion h September 4, 1913. The family continues to meet each September and will celebrate its 9 reunion this September.

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John Houlton

by Mavis Sattison

John Houlton, the first settler of DeKalb County, Indiana, was born in Highland County, Ohio, September 21, 1804, a son of Samuel Houlton, a pioneer of Highland County, and a soldier in the War of 1812. He was reared in the wilds of Ohio, having Indian boys and wild animals for his playmates. In 1827, he came to Williams County, Ohio, and worked for his brother Samuel in a saw mill on Fish Creek, near its confluence with the St. Joseph River. They rafted the lumber down the river to the Fort Wayne market.

He was married February 5, 1833, to Sarah Fee, who was born May 12, 1812. The following September they moved to DeKalb County, and September fourth raised the first house in the county. It was built of round logs, was one and a half stories high, and twenty feet square. It remained standing until 1860, when it was torn down, and the DeKalb County Pioneer Society had a number of canes made from its logs, presenting a cane to each pioneer whose settlement dated prior to 1840.

r. Houlton's wife died July 12, 1839, eving three children–Samuel, born at Lima, Indiana, February 1, 1838 (He was a member of Company B, First Michigan Infantry, in the War of the Rebellion, and died in Libby Prison); Margaret, born April 8, 1836, was the first female white child born in DeKalb County and Sarah, born July 1, 1836. Margaret Married William H. Sleutz, and had three children, Rinaldo, Burnett and Nancy Rosette. Sarah married Norman Nichols, and had six children, Orilla, William, Viola, Inez and Mary. One died in childhood.

November 21, 1839, Mr. Houlton married Nancy Lewis, daughter of Samuel Lewis. Their children were William L., Rebecca, John, Matthew K., Lewis N. and Roger R. One daughter, Mary Ann, died in 1869. She was the wife of Jeremiah Gnagy, and left one child, John. Rebecca married her brother-in-law, Jeremiah Gnagy, and had four sons, Guy, George, Girt and Glen. John married Mary Getz and had one son, Verne S. Roger married Amanda Mills and had one son, Artemus L. Roger was leader of leader of the Houlton Orchestra.

Mr. Houlton died on the old homestead, June 2, 1875. He was a consistent

The Houlton Bridge.

Christian, and a member of the Desciples Church.

Mrs. Houlton passed through many hardships and relates many peculiar and interesting accounts of the experiences of her life. She was possessed of unusual courage and was often helpful when it was necessary to have a strong hand and a brave heart. One instance of her undaunted will and courage may be of interest:

At one time, when about eighteen years of age, her father and brothers were away from home, and a man came to the house and asked if anyone could take him across the St. Joseph River, then swollen even with the banks. She told him she would take him over if he would obey her orders. He wanted to place the horse above the canoe, but that was not her way, and she refused to take him over. He finally came to her terms. She then placed the horse below the canoe, and told him to hold the bridle bit, while she rowed the canoe across the river. The man was forced to admit the soundness of her judgment, saying he never saw a girl of such courage and good sense.

At the time Mr. Houlton settled in DeKalb County, the Indians and wild animals roamed the forest at will. The only thing he ever hunted was squirrel. Deer were safe from his gun, although there were many at that time. One Sunday a flock of thirty turkeys came into his orchard, just at the rear of the house, and, although acting contrary to the wish of Mrs. Houlton, his early Presbyterian training would not allow him to shoot one on the Sabbath.

He set out the first orchard in DeKalb County, in the spring of 1834, obtaining the trees in Constantine, Michigan.

The Houlton Bridge

by Doris Houlton Roberts

According to the 1959 issue of the Indian Historical Magazine, the Houlton Bridge was located six miles north of Butler, Indiana. But I always think of it as being about three miles east of Hamilton, Indiana. It is located in section one, 35 N. and 14 E. over Fish Creek, by the way of the Bellefountain Road, with a load limit of five tons.

Originally, a covered bridge was built for shelter from the storms or for shade from the hot sun as well as for crossing a stream, as the pioneer traveled.

The school children passed through this bridge, over it, under it or around it, each morning and night to and from school. As one of those children, I remember the many challenges to walk the boards which were perhaps three feet above the floor of the bridge and how we had to wriggle around the "up and down timbers", and if we lost our balance or grip, we fell and lost to the older and stronger kids. If we were a little late and didn't have much time, we just tried to spit between the separated floor boards into the water flowing underneath the bridge or just frightened the pigeons that were roosting on the rafters and the cupolas above.

There were delicious May apples and sponge mushrooms just to the north around the bend in the stream and luscious big thorn apples by the apron full or the dinner bucket full, along the road to the east.

The first white settler came from Williams County, Ohio and before that from Highland County, Ohio. In 1833, he decided this was a fine place and a good location for a family. He walked to Fort Wayne by animal trail, to enter his claim, then returned to Ohio. John Houlton and some hired hands then came to Indiana in September of 1833 and built the first log cabin in DeKalb County, Indiana. A month later he brought his family to the cabin on Fish Creek, just to the north of the present Bellefountain Road.

The Patent Deed No. 2201, the United States of America, was issued by Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, signed by A.J. Donelson, Sec'y and Elijah Howard, a commissioner of General Land Office.

A covered bridge was built and named in his honor eight years after his death. Mr. Marion Howard and Mr. Asa Chapel did the masonry for the abutment of the bridge and Mr. George Werntz did the carpentry work for the 104 feet long structure (Werntz lived and built bridges in the east).

So far as is known, there were only two serious accidents occuring here. Bill Shultz was trying to avoid colliding with another car at the one lane bridge when he struck the abutment of the bridge and cut his jugular vein. The nearest neighbor, Mrs. Evans, held her hand over the wound all the way to the hospital.

Another time, John Miller and his wife, narrowly escaped when his car was found dangling or hanging half-way over the embankment.

The first floor planks ran cross-wise the bridge. These planks were replaced with planks running lengthwise when the

Christian, and a member of the Disciples Church.

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He was not the first entrant to DeKalb County, in the spring of 1834, receiving the Patent in Coldwater, Michigan.

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There were delicious May apples and sponge mushrooms. Just to the north across the road in the woods [illegible] the bend in the stream and [illegible] the water fall at the [illegible], where the road to the north.

The first white settler came from Williams County, Ohio and before that from Highland County, Ohio. In 1835, he decided this was a fine place and a good location for a family. He walked to Fort Wayne by Indian trail, to enter his claim, then returned to Ohio. John Houlton and some hired hands then came to Indiana in September of 1835 and built the first log cabin in DeKalb County, Indiana. A month later he brought his family to the cabin on Fish Creek, just to the north of the present [illegible] Road.

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The first floor planks ran cross-wise of the bridge. These planks were replaced with planks running lengthwise when the st planks wore out.

riginally the structure had one large pola and a smaller cupola on either side it. They were removed as time and ather took their toll. The windows, on h the north and south side were of the ivered type. This bridge was one of the t bridges in Indiana with louvered windows. They had to be boarded up as deteriation set in. And finally one day in May 1963, the structure was destroyed by fire by suspected arsonists and was replaced with a cement bridge which is fine and serviceable but will never erase the memories of the Old Houlton Bridge. The date on the bridge was 1884.

Destruction of the Bridge

by George Fee

oing back 99 years, why? During the ir of 1884 a covered bridge was structed to span Fish Creek.

he construction site was located about feet east of the junction of lefountain Road and Indiana State Road near the first homesite in DeKalb nty, that of John and Nancy Lewis lton, hence the Houlton Bridge.

his span was somewhat unique in that it the only covered bridge in theastern Indiana with louvered or ture windows. It too perhaps was the y span in this particular corner of the -state region of Ohio, Indiana and higan having cupolas at each end.

he bridge was 105 feet long, 12 feet e and 12 feet high. It was specified to high enough to permit farmers to haul ge loads of hay over and through the ige. Some were seventeen feet high none less than 12 feet.

s one gazed at the bridge, the rounded tals made a very impressive sight from the east and west approaches.

I learned that early in the 1900's the las and some of the windows were oved, a new roof was installed and a ion of the siding was replaced.

maternal grandfather, William "Bill" ner, painted the bridge the last time it painted, I'm told.

he records reveal also, that during the 's, and early 1880's a power struggle he name of graft was spreading across land, resulting in many elections ing out different than was planned or licted.

occured when and where county missioners and auditors campaigned on premise, that bridges could be tructed for less money without racts. With that in mind, two bridges constructed in 1884. Cedar Chapel ge near Auburn and Houlton's bridge ranklin township.

rge H. Werntz, a contractor from the , constructed the bridge.

This span was destroyed on the 14th day of may, 1963 by vandals setting fire to the structure. Eyewitnesses revealed the bridge seemed to explode in flames.

Today, a steel structure spans Fish Creek at Bellefountain road east of Hamilton.

I never learned or endeavored to learn what the bridge cost to construct. However, graft or no graft, contract or no contract, the cost was a bargain at today's prices. Right?

Whether or not Houlton's bridge contributed to the heritage of Hamilton and deserves a column in the village's paper, I cannot say. Personally I enjoyed and admired it very much.

As a tenderfoot during my scouting days, and when Charley Lingle was our Scout Master and Cliff Johnson was his assistant, and with that group of boys Charley needed an assistant, we camped sometimes on a grassy spot on the northside of the bridge on the shore of Fish Creek.

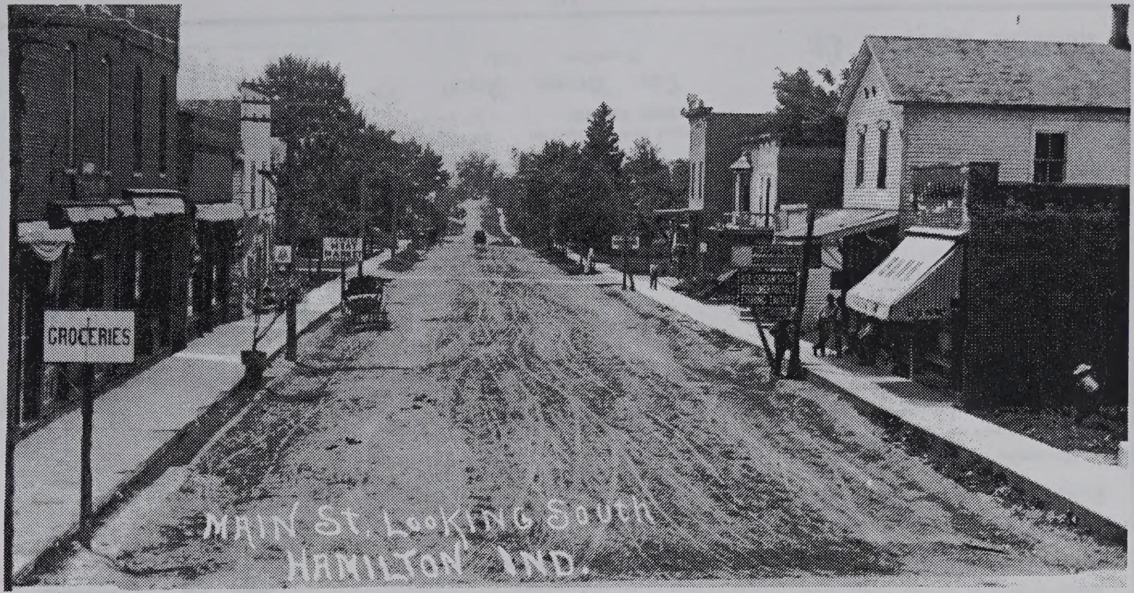
"Twas also fun and exciting going on the bridge and reading the names of those who had visited the span before, many from far away places, like Ohio, Michigan, some from Kentucky and even New York and New Jersey and many, many more.

During the summer of 1960, I took a colored snapshot of the bridge. I then obtained the services of an art student at Notre Dame of South Bend. He reproduced the photo in oil on silk. What a beautiful portrait of this covered bridge. Sometimes these bridges were called Kissing Bridges.

So I do feel it deserves a place in Hamilton's early history, especially now, 20 years ago, the date of its destruction and this year, 100 years almost from its construction.

Some of this information obtained while researching and preparing our Fee family history, "Relatives Speaking", also by an account written by a Mr. Henry Link for the new England Bridge Society.

Downtown Hamilton



Early Downtown Hamilton

The town of Hamilton as described in "The History of North East Indiana, 1920":

"Hamilton is a station on the Wabash Railroad, situated in Otsego Civil Township... It is beautifully situated on the placid waters of Fish Lake, and nearby are several important summer resorts where many city and town people from abroad spend much of their time in the heated summer months. The place is ideal for fishing, camping and boating.

"Records of Hamilton's early days are sketchy. The place did not meet the expectations of its original founders, men came in, traded a while and moved on to greener pastures. This kind of settlement never leaves any permanent record, so the real early happenings in and about Hamilton are forever lost to the local historians."

However, it is known that in 1836 Nicanor Munson entered the land where the town of Hamilton now stands including a tract covering the outlet of Hamilton Lake (then called Fish Lake). Water power was produced by the flow from this outlet and was developed to quite an extent in time. The plat of the town was made on this tract of land after Doc Tuttle, agent for a company of eastern capitalists called "Steuben County Company," bought Munson's interest. The town was named "Enterprise" and lots were offered for sale.

The original town plat, as described from the present day intersection of 427 and Bellefountaine, extended north to the lake, south one block, east to the creek, and west to the street bordering the east side of the cemetery. In 1838 the town's name was changed to Hamilton.During these early days, John Fee donated land to the settlement for the cemetery and a church. A Methodist Church was completed at the site in 1852.

In 1837, Sydney P. Gambia came to Enterprise. He built a house, a store which he stocked with general merchandise, and an ashery. He also built a gristmill for the company and a few years later purchased the water power company. Eventually the gristmill was torn down and a saw mill was built.

In 1859 John Fee, who had bought the saw mill from Gambia erected a flouring mill at that site. Andrew Sewell was proprietor of the Hamilton Flour Mill and John Sewell was resident owner of a grist mill one and one-half miles from the village.

Sometime before 1841, a washout occured in the dam. "The History of North East Indiana" records, "The flood was very high, and an over turning tree fell in such a manner that Mr. Waterman was killed and Gambia was injured." In 1841 Sydney and Oscar Gambia (later postmaster) sold their general merchandise store to B.B. Long. Sydney moved to Minnesota in 1854.

Other early businessmen of Hamilton include Abram Beecher, who came here to trade in 1839 from Jefferson County, New York, and Reuben Lint, who had a hotel and liquor store.

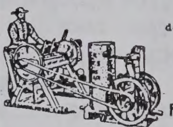
John Fee built the first house in the township, one and a quarter miles west of town. The first house built in Hamilton was a log cabin. This home owned by John Quicksell, from New York, was located on West Bellefountaine in the first block on the south side of the street. Mrs John Fee carried meals on horseback from her home to the workmen.

THE LEADER
E. E. SWAIDNER

VANCE
THE BAKER

BOYS!
YOU REALLY OUGHT
TO KNOW ME,
I AM THE *Ideal*
GIRL
Dressed In a
Suit of
THE *Ideal* CLOTHING CO'S.
OVERALLS
WHICH I CHEERFULLY
RECOMMEND
AS BEING THE
BEST FITTING
WEARING
LOOKING
R.R. UNIFORM
OVERALL SUITS
ON THE MARKET
FOR SALE BY
D. W. HESS

GET YOUR FEED GROUND
The Way it Pays



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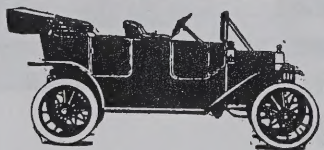
Hamilton News.
Hamilton, Ind.
Clif. M. Johnston, Editor.

FORD N. SWIFT
Furniture and Undertaking
Saves You Money
Farmers Phone Store and Residence

Miller's
PHARMACY
HAMILTON, INDIANA

C. D. KEPLER
Hamilton Lumber Company

BUY A
FORD



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How does this look to you car prospects?
Fully Equipped $690.00
Remember this, if you buy a Ford Car you are sure of the best service and when you need repairs we carry a full stock. Ford repairs are from 25 to 50 per cent cheaper than any other we know of. Let us show you the New Ford.
Watch the Ford go by.

Wabash Line
Time Card in Effect *June.*, 1905.
Trains arrive and depart at Hamilton, Ind as follows:

Dr. F. C. Snowberger
DENTIST
Hours; 7 to 11 and 1 to 5.
Work Guaranteed. Office, Swaidner Bldg
Hamilton, Indiana.

REDTAG SALE
Next Saturday we begin our Red Tag Sale.
Drop in and see a genuine Bargain Sale.
John Dargue

SHOES
When you want shoes
That Wear
Buy
PINGREE
Men's Pat. Leather $3.50 and 4
Box Calf and Vici $3 to 3 50
Boys and Little Gents
I have the best that money will buy.
Ladies and Misses
See them as they are what you want.

Millinery Opening
Friday and Saturday
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Finest Line ever shown in Hamilton.
Over Miller's Drug Store.
ELSIE STULLER

Rubber Goods
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and Heavy Overs
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BOY 110
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Everything in Hardware
Is complete. Let us figure on your hardware bills. We can do you good. Everything in Oil Stoves, Gasoline Stoves and Ovens. Prices are O. K.
Hamilton Hardware Co.

Look at This Combination
It will be worth your while to consider it.
Womans Home Companion
Embroidery Magazine
Both for $1.50
Levi Brown, Agent
Hamilton, Ind.

Businessmen - 1880 to 1900

According to "The History of Northeast Indiana, 1920" and "The History of Steuben County, 1955" the business interests of Hamilton from 1880 to 1900 included:

Truman Beecher, tin shop; Andrew Stout, postmaster and cobbler. While postmaster, he studied medicine, and passed the state examination and became a veterinarian.

Myer Andrews, drugs and liquors.

Mr. Zirkle, general store. He sold out to Simeon Duck, who later sold to J. Wesley Thomas.

Dr. Schofield, drugs and saloon.

Dr. J.F. Cameron, hotel keeper and general practitioner.

G. R. Farnum, hardware.

Joe Sewell, undertaker. In 1892 T. H. Dirrim took over the undertaking business; he worked under Henry Weicht of Angola.

Dirrim also owned a furniture store which he sold in 1894. He then built the Fish Lake Hotel on the corner lot adjoining Wolf Bros. Store (on the west), which he operated for about five years.

Francis Klikle, general merchandise.

Andrew Sewell, flour mill.

John Sewell, grist mill.

Frank Farley, blacksmith.

Joseph Wiler, blacksmith.

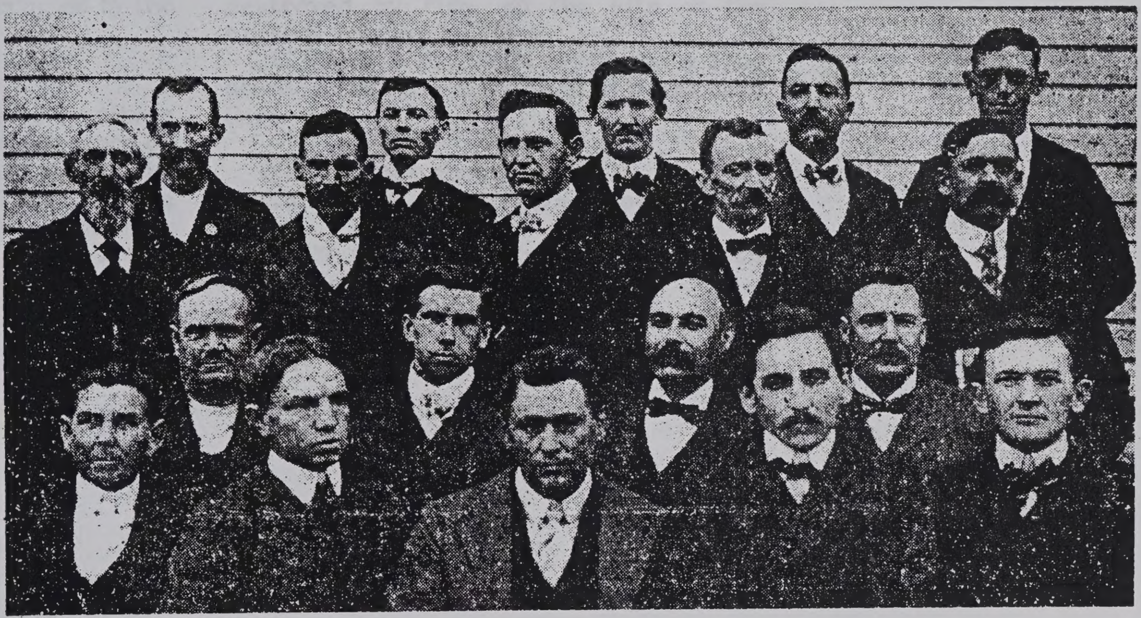
Hiram Sweet, saw mill.

Later, Lester Kimmel bought an interest in the mill and it was called Sweet and Kimmel Saw Mill.

O. P. Brown, barber shop and confectionery.

John Zeigler, harness shop.

Businessmen - Early 1900's



Pictured above are the Hamilton businessmen of the early 1900's. It was found in the August 2, 1935 edition of the Hamilton News. The following accounting of the early businessmen was written by news editor Clif Johnston in that issue:

Back row standing, left to right:

W.M. CHARD - Mr. Chard was the owner of the lumber yard, later disposing of a part interest to M.A. Howard and still later disposing of his interest to Lon Howard which brought in the firm of Howard and Son.

C.B. DIRRIM - Mr. Dirrim conducted a jewelry store in the front of the building occupied by the bank of Learned & Son.

ED HAGERTY - Mr. Hagerty conducted a general store in the room now occupied by the Kissinger Drug Store.

O.P. BROWN - Mr. Brown operated a barber shop in the old frame building which stood on the site of the present Brown building and was moved west to make room for the present structure. The cement block wall of the present building fell onto the roof of the old building during the fire which destroyed the Leader building, and the old building was later torn down.

J.W. LEARNED - Mr. Learned was engaged in the banking business with his father, O.P. Learned, and were located in the room now occupied by the Hamilton Bank.

Front row standing, left to right:

CHAS. OSTER - Mr. Oster conducted a meat market in the building north of the

dware which was later destroyed by , on the site now occupied by the post ce.

MER ZEIGLER - Mr. Zeigler had a repair p in the building with his brother, J.B. gler.

S. WILL - Mr. Will conducted a drug re in the Cameron building on the west of main street.

W. TAYLOR - Mr. Taylor operated a taurant in one of the Thomas frame ldings on the northwest corner of the n square which were moved west and oss the street and later destroyed by

E. SWAIDNER - Mr. Swaidner was prietor of The Leader Store and was ated in the building now owned by Mrs. zie Zeigler, near the M.E. Church. He r built the Leader building which was troyed by fire in 1912 and replaced the destroyed with the present one which been remodeled and is occupied by the man Service Station.

ated, left to right:

H. DIRRIM - Mr. Dirrim had a furniture e in the frame building which stood on of the lot now occupied by the dard Service Station. This building moved to the north side of the main are and converted into a hotel. It was r destroyed by fire.

LEVI BROWN- Mr. Brown conducted a news stand in the building that stood on the site of the present Shrider I.G.A. store.

J.B. BEECHER - Mr. Beecher was helping his father in the tin shop and has been conducting the business since his father's death.

BERNIE RAYMOND - Mr. Raymond operated the creamery.

H.L. GRIFFITH - Mr. Griffith was the drayman at that time and is still engaged in the business, using a truck in place of the horses used then.

JOHN DARGUE - Mr. Dargue operated a variety store in the building that stood on the lot between the Malone and Robinett buildings.

D.W. HESS - Mr. Hess was proprietor of a store in the room now occupied by the Hamilton Dry Goods Co.

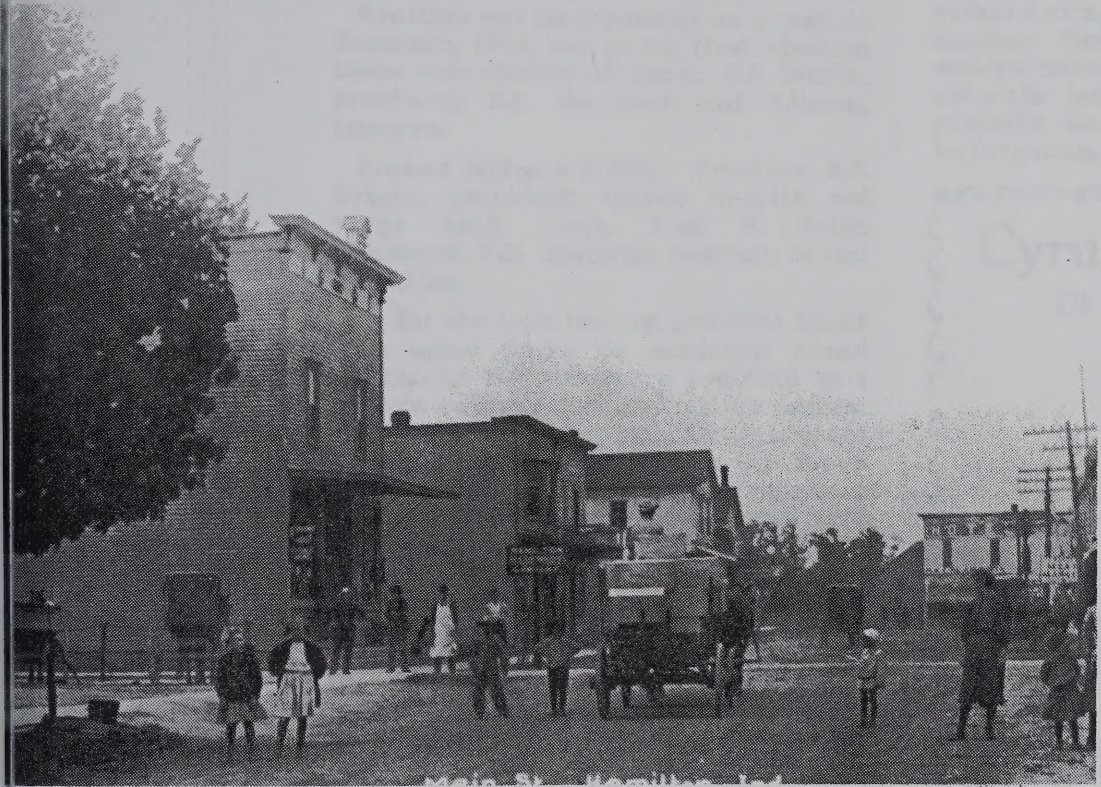
J.B. ZEIGLER - Mr. Zeigler operated a harness shop in the frame building, later destroyed by fire, on the site of the present Zeigler building.

C.E. SWIFT - Mr. Swift conducted a drug store in the room now occupied by the Lake Cafe.

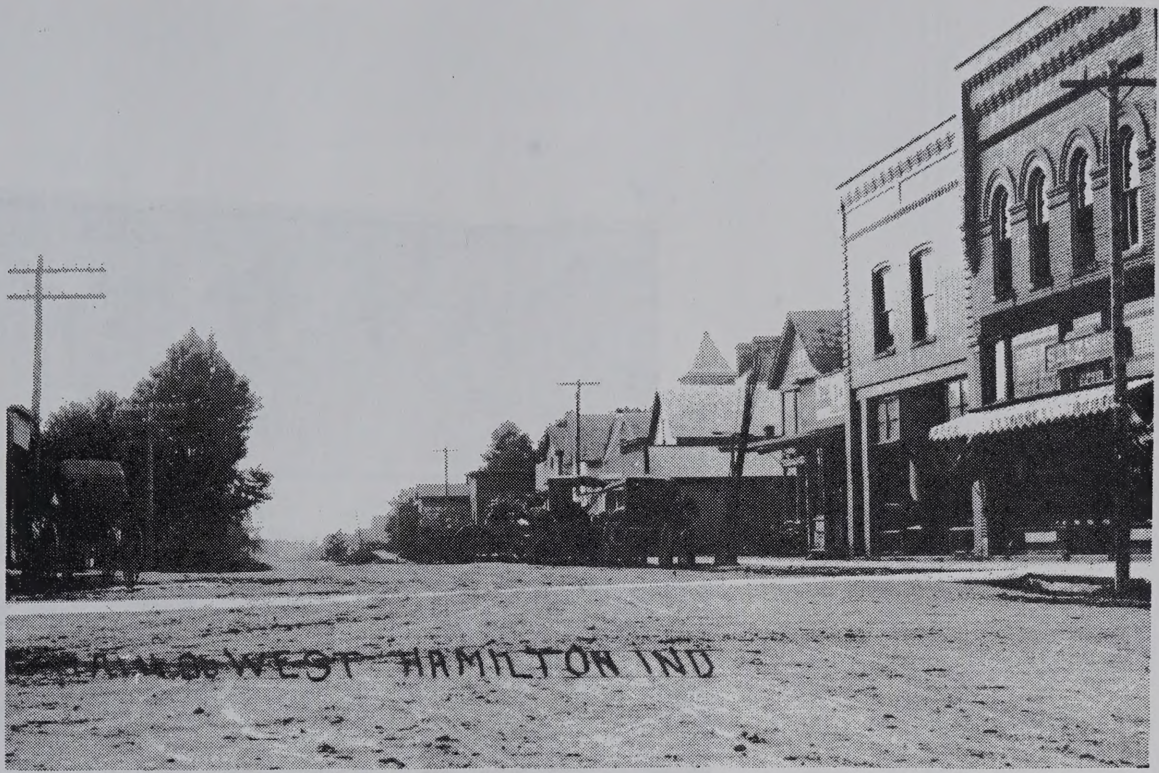
Pictures not shown:

C.B. HANES - Mr. Hanes operated the hotel.

JAMES OBERLIN - Mr. Oberlin ran the livery stable.



Road 427 looking north from where fire station is now. The pump in the lower left er was the town water pump. The wagon, center, was Harley Griffith's dray wagon used ansport supplies from the Wabash Railroad depot.



View of West Bellefountain from main intersection, early 1900's.

Municipal and Business Affairs of 1920

In the History of Northeast Indiana 1920 Hamilton is described as follows:

Hamilton was incorporated as a town in November, 1914, and at the first election these were elected officers: C.B. Dirrim, president; E.E. Swaidner and V.Vance, trustees.

Present officers (1920): Trustees, B.F. Wright, president; Oliver Oberlin and Noyce Reid; clerk, Fred N. Swift; treasurer, F.D. Spurling; Marshal, Daniel McClellan.

So far the town has not provided itself with water works or municipal owned lights, but the latter are provided by a private company that derives its current from the water power, right in the midst of the town. Cisterns and wells are drawn from in case of fire, and a volunteer company fights fire manfully and very successfully.

The milling interests, once so extensive here, have about vanished. There is still a sawmill which cuts hard wood lumber.

All of the ordinary business callings that go to make up a place of this size are here found flourishing. An excellent school building adorns the town.

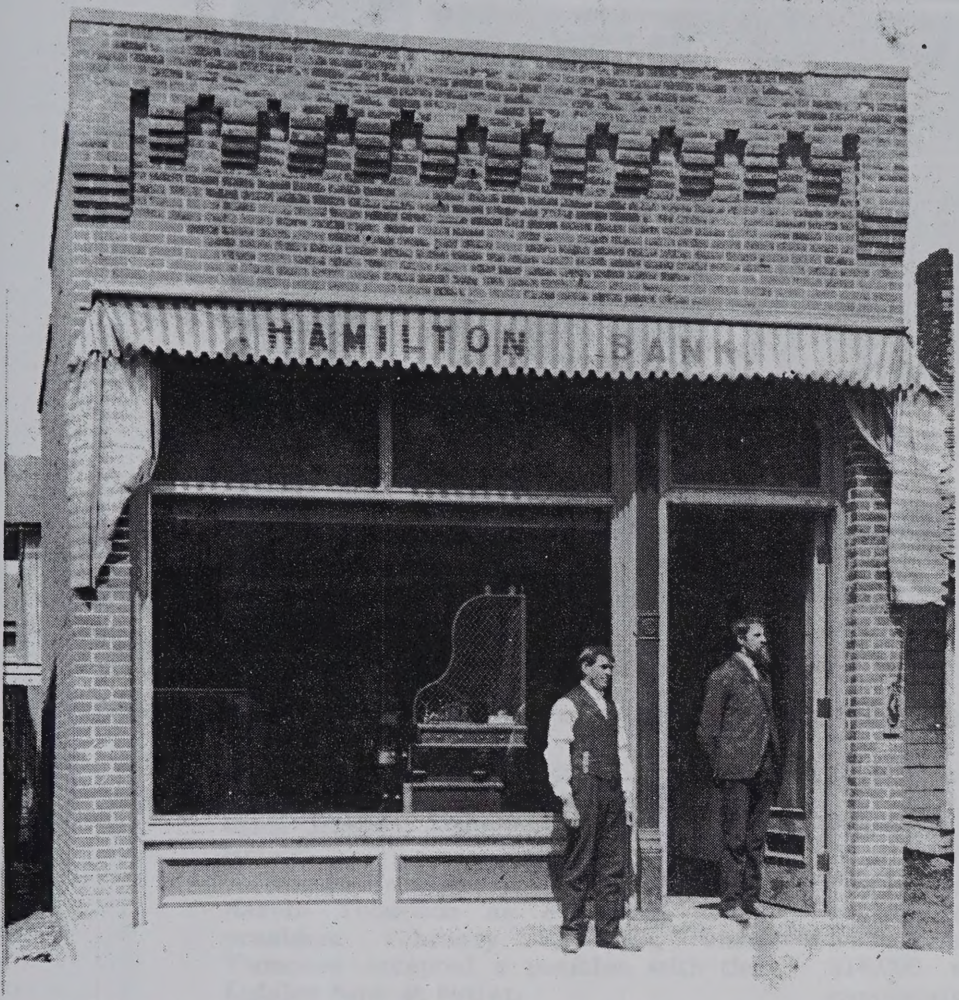
The post office now has three rural routes extending out from it. The present postmaster is George Stout. This is a third class office.

Hamilton is situated handsomely and is within a rich, well developed agricultural section. Fine farm homes, with large and modern barns, silos and other adjuncts make the landscape to the stranger and passerby one of beauty, and one not soon to be forgotten.

Cyrus B. Dirrim

Of Otsego Township

Who would appreciate your vote for the Republican nomination



The first Hamilton Bank building located on the west side of 427.

The Hamilton Bank

The Hamilton Bank was organized in 1905 with a capital of $10,000 by Oscar H. Taylor. They purchased the bank from Oliver Learned and his son Jay.

The bank was in continuous operation by the Taylor family for almost a half century. After the death of Oscar Taylor, the bank was taken over by sons, John L., Benny B., and Russell H. They continued to operate the bank until the death of John L., n the spring of 1949 and the death of Benny B., March 25, 1950. At that time, Russell H. and his wife, Betty, bought their heirs out and operated the bank with the assistance of Glida Jackson and Roscoe C. son of Russell).

After the death of Russell H. on March 2, 1954, his wife, Betty, son Roscoe, and Glida Jackson conducted the business until it was sold November 11, 1959 to a group of men from Marion, Indiana. At that time the board of directors consisted of Vyron Detamore, Phillip Miller, Ed Oakerson, Paul Rinearson and Kenneth Wright. The bank was incorporated August 8, 1961 to a state bank which it is today.

The original bank owned by the Learneds was located next to the old hotel where Freemans 66 Station is located today.

The bank organized by the Taylor family was located in a building next to the What Not Shop where the bank is located today. They began the bank in the front of the building and later put a hardware store in the back of the building which carried anything from nails to horse collars.

In 1969, the bank building was torn down and the present bank was constructed.

The Hamilton Bank's second home was on the east side of 427.

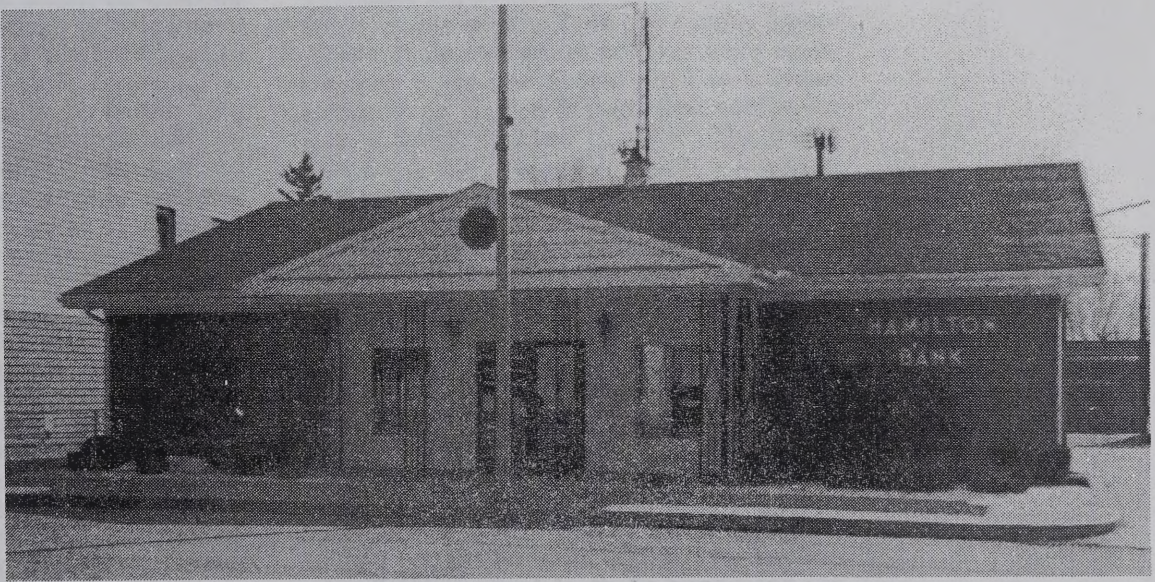
When the present bank opened its doors, Marvin Thompson was the executive vice-president and director, with directors, W.C. Millhouse, Vyron Detamore, Glida Jackson, Josephine Miller and Ken Wright.

John A. Randinelli, Auburn, replaced Marvin Thompson as executive vice-president February 4, 1974, when Thompson accepted a position with the Knisley Bank at Butler.

Don Mefford was on the board of directors in 1975 following the death of W. C. Millhouse.

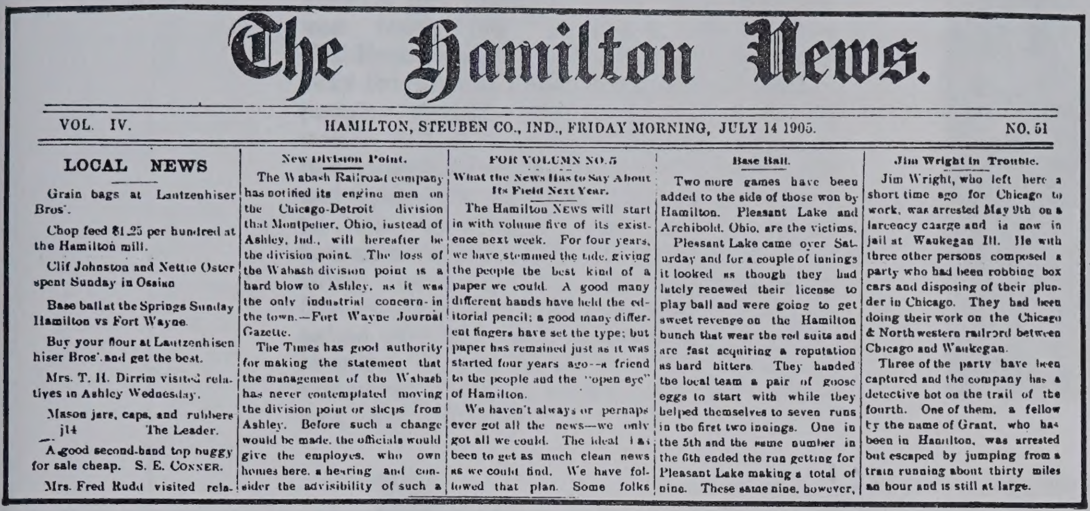
In 1981 a holding company, Steuben Financial, Inc., was formed and bought the Hamilton Bank.

It is believed that the bank has only been robbed two times - once in 1918 and again on December 1, 1964, when approximately $18,000 was stolen. The money was completely recovered.



The present Hamilton Bank was built in 1969.

Newspaper - 1880's to 1945



The Hamilton News.

VOL. IV. HAMILTON, STEUBEN CO., IND., FRIDAY MORNING, JULY 14 1905. NO. 51

LOCAL NEWS

Grain bags at Lautzenhiser Bros'.

Chop feed $1.25 per hundred at the Hamilton mill.

Clif Johnston and Nettie Oster spent Sunday in Ossian

Base ball at the Springs Sunday Hamilton vs Fort Wayne.

Buy your flour at Lautzenhisen hiser Bros'. and get the best.

Mrs. T. H. Dirrim visited relatives in Ashley Wednesday.

Mason jars, caps, and rubbers j14 The Leader.

A good second-hand top buggy for sale cheap. S. E. CONNER.

Mrs. Fred Rudd visited rela-

New Division Point.

The Wabash Railroad company has notified its engine men on the Chicago-Detroit division that Montpelier, Ohio, instead of Ashley, Ind., will hereafter be the division point. The loss of the Wabash division point is a hard blow to Ashley, as it was the only industrial concern in the town.—Fort Wayne Journal Gazette.

The Times has good authority for making the statement that the management of the Wabash has never contemplated moving the division point or shops from Ashley. Before such a change would be made, the officials would give the employes, who own homes here, a hearing and consider the advisibility of such a

FOR VOLUMN NO. 5

What the News Has to Say About Its Field Next Year.

The Hamilton NEWS will start in with volume five of its existence next week. For four years, we have stemmed the tide, giving the people the best kind of a paper we could. A good many different hands have held the editorial pencil; a good many different fingers have set the type; but paper has remained just as it was started four years ago--a friend to the people and the "open eye" of Hamilton.

We haven't always or perhaps ever got all the news—we only got all we could. The ideal has been to get as much clean news as we could find. We have followed that plan. Some folks

Base Ball.

Two more games have been added to the side of those won by Hamilton. Pleasant Lake and Archibold, Ohio, are the victims.

Pleasant Lake came over Saturday and for a couple of innings it looked as though they had lately renewed their license to play ball and were going to get sweet revenge on the Hamilton bunch that wear the red suits and are fast acquiring a reputation as hard hitters. They handed the local team a pair of goose eggs to start with while they helped themselves to seven runs in the first two innings. One in the 5th and the same number in the 6th ended the run getting for Pleasant Lake making a total of nine. These same nine, however,

Jim Wright in Trouble.

Jim Wright, who left here a short time ago for Chicago to work, was arrested May 9th on a larceny charge and is now in jail at Waukegan Ill. He with three other persons composed a party who had been robbing box cars and disposing of their plunder in Chicago. They had been doing their work on the Chicago & Northwestern railrord between Chicago and Waukegan.

Three of the party have been captured and the company has a detective hot on the trail of the fourth. One of them, a fellow by the name of Grant, who has been in Hamilton, was arrested but escaped by jumping from a train running about thirty miles an hour and is still at large.

Portion of the front page of The Hamilton news July 14, 1905.

In the 1880's A. J. Stout had a hand printing press with which he printed sale bills, cards, etc. In the early 1890's a newspaper was published in Hamilton. It is difficult to trace but it is said that this first newspaper called the "Hamilton Advocate" was edited by Thomas French. Vern Briner, married to a sister of J. I. Farley, also owned a paper in Hamilton. He later moved to Orland.

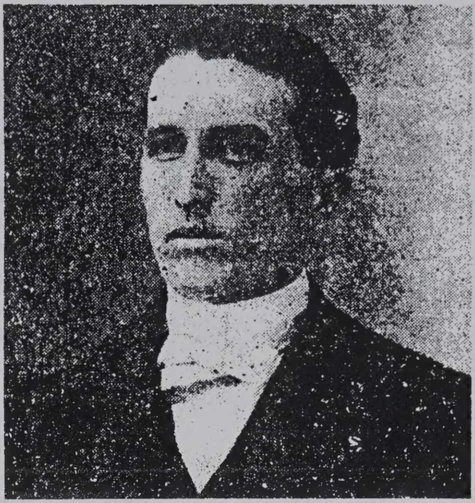
In 1901 Clif M. Johnston came to Hamilton from Ossian, Indiana and started the Hamilton News. In the December 20, 1901 issue of the Hamilton News a friend of Johnston's wrote: "Clif M. Johnston, editor and manager as well as joint owner of the News was born April 12, 1876, upon a farm, two and one half miles south of Ossian, Wells County, Indiana. At age of four years Mr. Johnston's father, a most estimable man and true citizen, died, leaving the mother and a small family to battle life unaided by his kindly protection...at an early age the future editor was sent to school and from the records of the instructors and the memory of classmates we learn that the study tasks were always cleverly performed...

"Mr. Johnston finished the common branches and entered high school where he passed rapidly through the first three divisions - Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior. For reasons entirely creditable, at the age of 19, he left school and took hold of the world's work vigorously - one of his characteristics. For about three years he worked in the factory - piled and jointed staves, then at other labor, accumulating brawn and good judgement which comes from a close contact with the world. November 8, 1899, he entered Mr. Keefer's printing office, in six months mastered the intricasies of the trade, and in the following April located at Maysville, Indiana. The Maysville News was discontinued April 12, 1901 owing to lethargy of business in that place.The 26th day of June the plant was removed from Maysville to Hamilton and the first paper was issued July 12th." Within a short time he became sole owner.

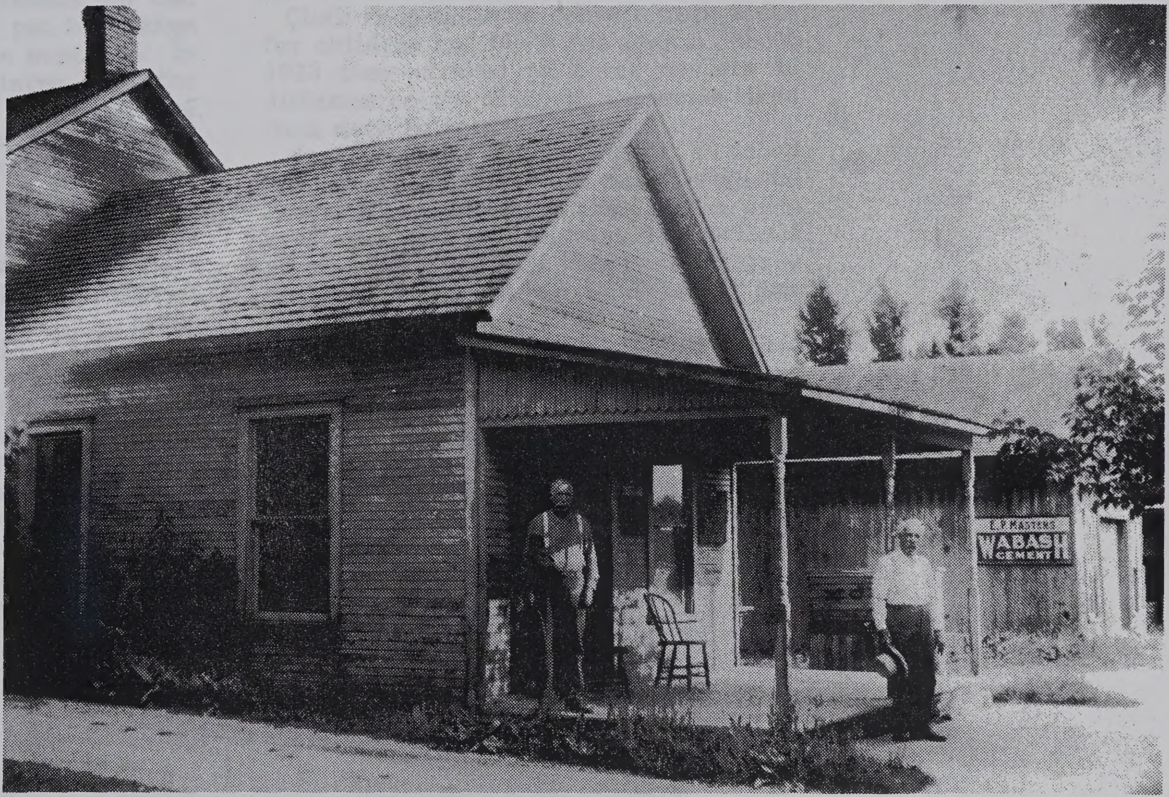
The equipment was moved to Hamilton on a two horse wagon. The news office was set up in a building which would later be the town hall. It moved some time later to the same building as T. A. Beecher's tin shop. Its next home was the Leader building. That building was destroyed by fire February 28, 1912. After issuing the paper for a couple months from the Ashley Times office while equipment repairs were made, the new plant was established in a frame building on Church Street. New equipment was added from time to time. The paper was hand set until 1924 when a linotype was added to take care of the typesetting. The paper was politically independent. It was published each Friday afternoon and enjoyed a good weekly circulation in Steuben and DeKalb counties. "The History of N. E. Indiana, 1920" commented - "The reader of this local newspaper gets only the interesting and clean, unobjectionable news items of the community hence, is a welcome weekly household vistor."

Johnston remained head of the Hamilton News until 1945 when he sold it to Horace Husselman. Even after retirement he helped out at the news office. He and his wife Nettie stayed in their home near the office until their deaths in 1965. He died in January, she in May.

To get an insight into the personal side of Clif Johnston, we talked with his adopted daughter, Pauline Glass, of Auburn. Her natural mother died when she was four, the Johnstons, who were childless, adopted her. She said she feels very fortunate to have lived with such nice people. Nettie, she said, was a handy woman and a very hard worker. Besides her household work, she gathered the news and folded the papers. Clif was dedicated to his newspaper work but of easy temperment and witty. "He never said a bad thing about anyone," his daughter said. One example of his wit was when a relative asked why he wasn't jealous of his wife's keeping a photo of an old beau, he answered, "Why, if no one else had wanted her, why would I!"



Clif Johnston



The first Hamilton Lumber Company.

Hamilton Lumber Company

The first recorded manager was Elliott P. Masters, head of the owner firm of Masters & Reed. They sold out to William Chard in the early 1900's. The next owners were Marion Howard and his son, C.A. Howard, who sold the business to Herman Kohl and Fred Webb in the 1930's. They also owned the lumber yards in Angola, Ashley and Hudson. In 1935 Ora Kaiser became manager of the Hamilton Lumber yard.

Paul Headley started working at the lumberyard under Kaiser in 1961 and became manager in 1966. He bought the business from Kohl and Webb in 1969.

In 1971 a fire, apparently caused by lightning, wiped out two buildings and an estimated $60,000 worth of stock. The business was rebuilt. The 5400 square foot showroom and office addition was built in 1980.

Swift Funeral Home

by Bob Swift

My father was Ford N. Swift. He was the town funeral director and furniture dealer in Hamilton.

He started his business in 1910 in a small building next to the I.O.O.F. Building.

When the Malone Building was completed in 1916 he rented the north room and moved his store. There was a small room in the northwest corner that Brownie Kepler rented for his barber shop. There was a double entrance so there was no problem.

In 1924 Burr Gates moved his grocery store from the K of P Building so dad rented the room and moved his store there. The room had a full basement so dad finished the basement and put in a large casket display room in the west end. In the east end he built a large rack for mattresses and displayed used furniture he had traded in and refinished. Used furniture was in big demand for lake cottages.

His first hearse was horse drawn and was heavily carved. The outside was black and the inside was highly polished mahogany. There were large brass carriage lamps on each side. Due to its large wheels it was about eight feet high.

In 1922 dad purchased his first motor hearse. It, too, was heavily carved. It was painted Gray. The motor was a four cylinder Red Seal Continental. The body was so heavy and tires were so poor dad would jack up the hearse off the floor with hub jacks. He always kept a set of rear end gears on hand.

There were no funeral homes and all embalming was done in the home.

Almost all funerals were held in the church. A few were held in the home. Almost all funerals were large. If a person was not well known or not liked too well people went the the funeral to show respect.

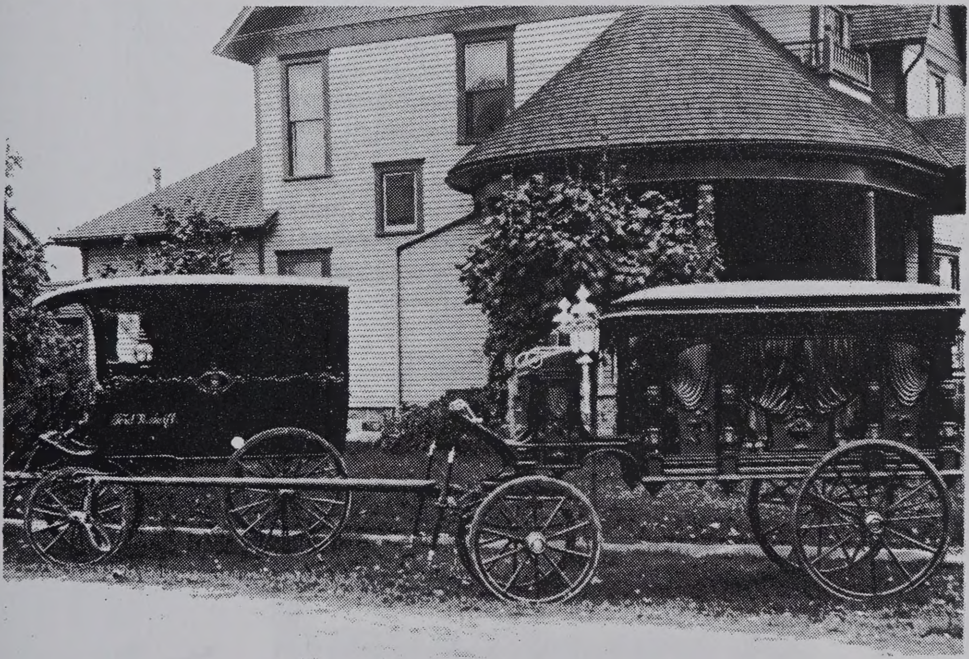
In 1926 dad purchased what was called a limousine style funeral car. It was black and had a Big Six Studebaker motor.

So many children died in the twenties dad stocked as many children's caskets as he did for adults.

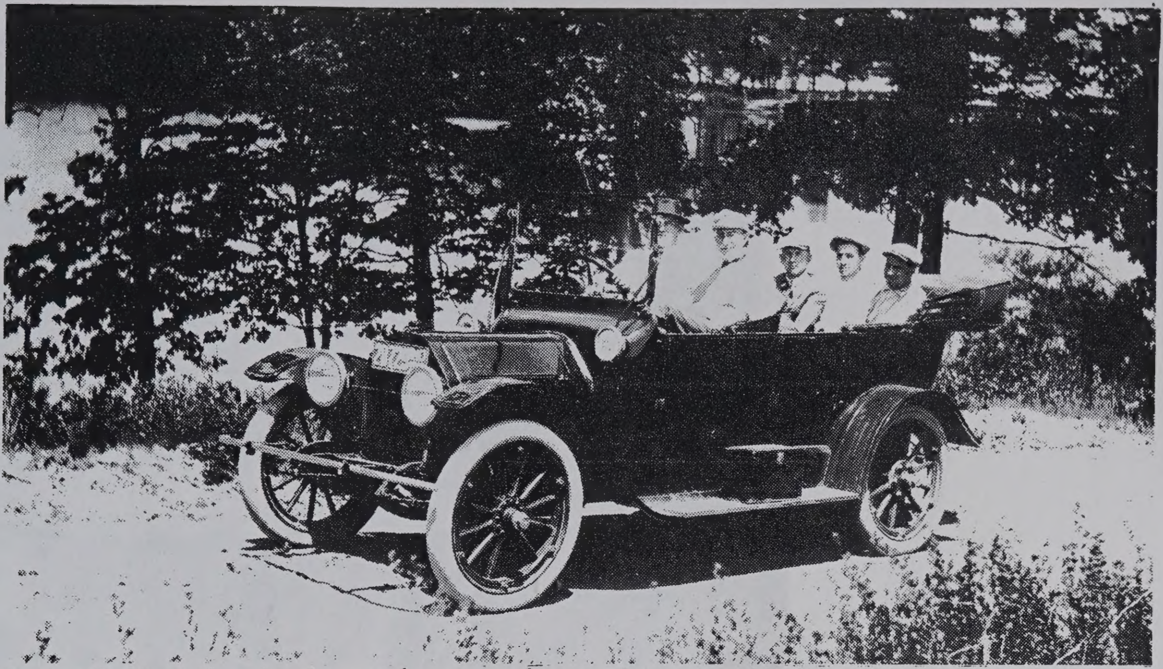
Cloth covered wood caskets were white for children and black for adults. About 1925 they started to cover caskets in different colors of plush, and people liked them much better.

Most caskets were highly finished hardwood; walnut, oak and cherry were the favorites. The men that made them were craftsmen and they were as near perfect as possible. Steel caskets were not made until just before dad died. He bought just one.

Roads were so bad in the winter and spring, dad still had to use the horse drawn hearse. Earl Harns owned a team of beautiful dapple gray draft horses so dad would hire him to pull the hearse. Hi Fisher, who lived at Cold Springs, was the last person to ride in the horse drawn hearse.



Swift Funeral Home vehicles.



Gustav Wolf, at the wheel, owned a general store in town and his sons Mose and Harry joined him in the enterprise.

The Wolfs

Wolf Brothers was one of the oldest business places in town. I remember Gus Wolf, the father of Mose and Harry. Wolf's sold their own brand of flour when I was young and would pay us 1 cent for the return of the sack.

They bought grain, wool and onions and owned a large elevator on the south side of the railroad track. Ernie Schmidt and Shorty Heston worked for them.

They occupied the middle room of the K of P building where they sold feed and seed. Garden seed was sold in bulk and 5 cents was about the maximum needed for any vegetable.

They stored wool in the basement under the drug store and when it was sacked to ship an inspector weighed the sacked wool. Burlap sacks were about six feet long and were fastened by a hook under a special frame. Boys were hired to tramp the fleeces as they were tossed to them so more wool could be placed in a sack. It was a greasy job.

Mose and Harry were so good to me after the death of my father. They could never find fish so if I was available they took me with them. We fished some in Michigan so they bought me a license to fish in that state. Mose liked ham and being a jew, pork was prohibited. If we stopped for a sandwich he would always tell me to buy him a pink beef.

After I left Hamilton, they moved their store to the garage building that is now used by Pittsfield. They sold Hudson and Terraplane automobiles, clothing, General Electric appliances and Johnson outboard motors. Any time we needed any items they sold I would call them and they would ship it to me. They always charged me only the amount it cost them plus shipping.

They were two of my best friends and were an asset to the community.

We are now ready to buy

Marketable New Wheat

We also want your

Clover Seed

We handle the

NAPPANEE AND WAUSEON

High Grade Patent Flour

GUSTAV WOLFF, Hamilton Ind.

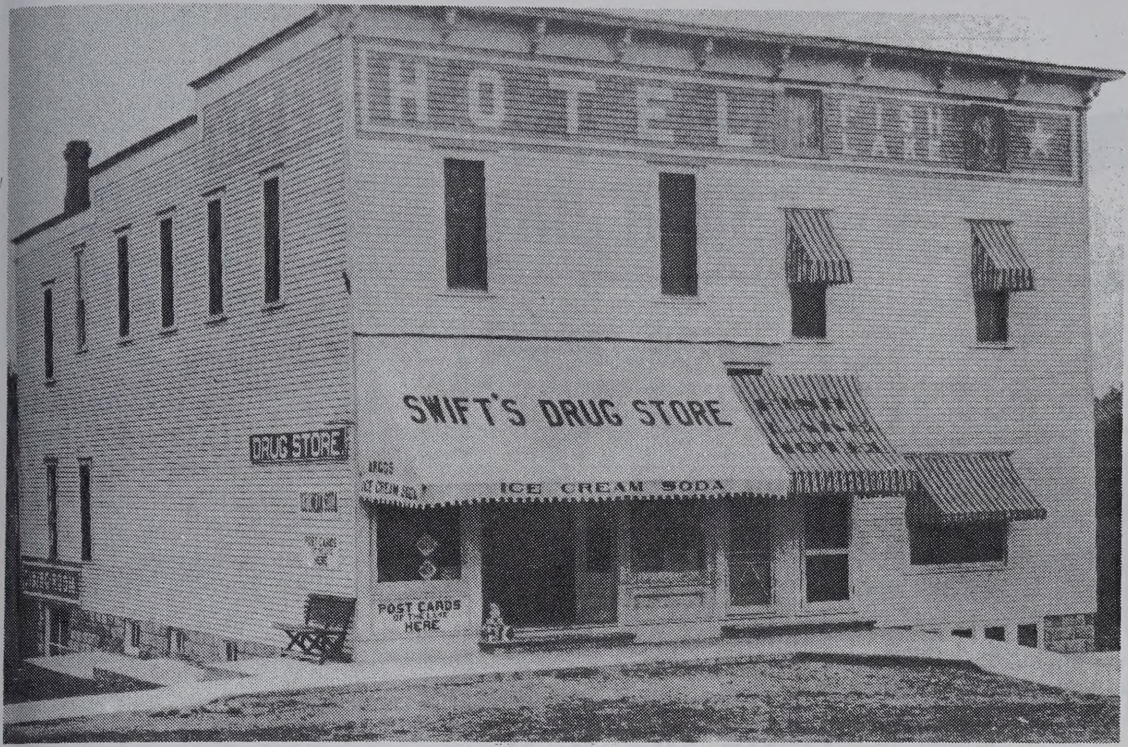
Fertilizer

with

2 & 3 perct Potash

G. Wolff & Sons Co.

Hamilton, Ind. Both Phones. Edon, Ohio.



The Fish Lake Hotel and Swift's Drug Store.

Drug Stores

by Bob Swift

Before I can remember, dad's uncle, Charlie Swift had a drug store in The Hamilton Hotel but had moved to Butler.

Bert Kissinger opened a drug store in the room that is now The Mixing Bowl. He was the last registered pharmacist in Hamilton.

Bert carried a full line of cosmetics, shaving products, patent medicines and could mix any prescription. He also sold some of his own formulas. Many people would go to Bert instead of a physician. He was very adept at placing a gallon bottle n top of his arm and pouring liquid into a mall bottle without a funnel. He carried a arge line for treatment of animals.

A large part of the store was the soda ountain. The furniture was the twisted teel rod type with wooden tops on the ables and chairs. He sold sodas, sundaes, ilk and malted shakes, bulk ice cream, ones and lollipops. A lollipop was a scoop f ice cream that was scraped straight on the bottom, a stick was placed in the center and then dipped in chocolate. He made most of them in vanilla flavor but some with pink ice cream. If a person found a pink one he would be given another one free. It was a big incentive to buy lollipops.

He measured and sold trusses for ruptures.

He sold wallpaper in a large room in back of the store. He had large books of samples so women could select the paper of their choice. All rooms in homes were papered so business was good.

He sold tobacco and sold the only good chocolate candy in town in bulk.

Bert was a good man and very accomodating. He was usually a participant in the jokes men pulled on each other.

He died suddenly in the late twenties and people missed him very much. He provided a very important service to the community.

Kissinger's Drug Store

Bakeries

W. COX
THE BAKER

Cookies dozen 12c

Pies each 15c

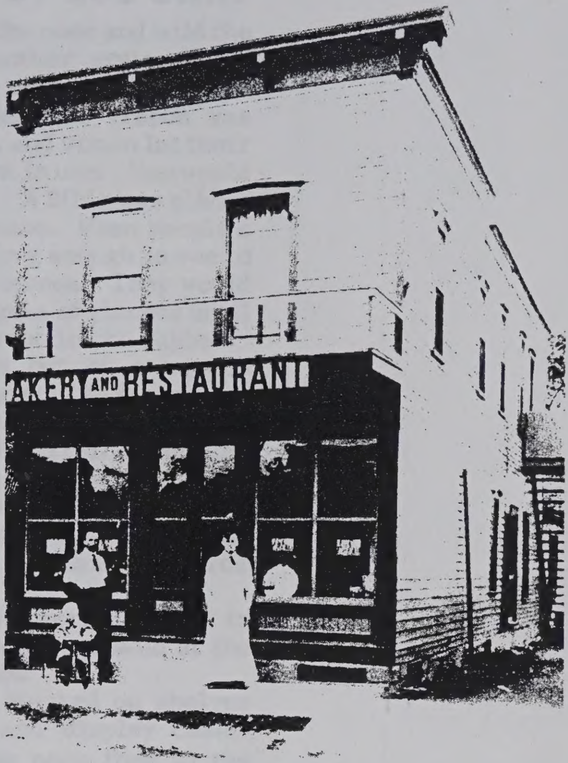
Bread 5c and 10c

Graham Bread

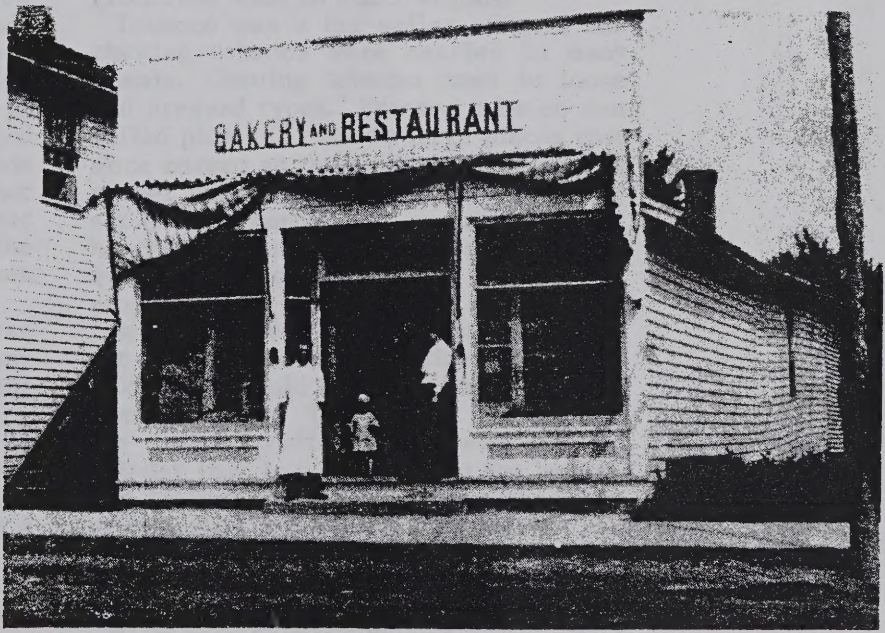
Ever ready to supply you

W R Cox, Prop

This ad is from a 1916 Hamilton News.



Warren Cox's Bakery was located on the north side of a two-story building that stood about where Howard Insurance is now.



The Vance Bakery was on the east side of Wayne Street, just north of the Malone building. This photo was taken before the Malone building ws built in 1916.

Groceries

by Bob Swift

The grocery stores were a far cry from the modern supermarkets of today.

The earliest grocer I can remember was John Dargue. His store was on the east side of the street where the bank is now located.

It was fascinating to watch him tie a sack (he had only one arm). He would place the ordered item in the sack, fold down the top, put the end of the string in his mouth, wrap the string twice around the sack and tie a knot, all with one hand. He would then bite the string in two.

Many items were sold in bulk. They were stored in barrels, wooden boxes or glass cases. Sugar, salt, crackers, flour, pickles, dried fruit, spices, and dried fish were some of these products. Crackers were stored in a glass case. There was a slanted baffle above the opening so the crackers would not choke the opening.

Bananas came on the stalk and were sold by the dozen. There were both yellow and red bananas. I haven't seen red bananas since I was a boy. There was always a waiting list for banana stalks. Women hung them in the hen house to keep out chicken lice.

Farmers had large flocks of chickens and milk cows. Women would trade eggs and butter for groceries. Farm women raised and canned their own vegetables and fruit, so all they traded for were a few essentials. Little money changed hands when they traded. After butter was churned it was pressed into a fancy mold. Butter was displayed in a butter case in the store. The woman's name was placed on the butter so people knew who had made it. If the woman was known to be dirty, her butter would not sell until some stranger bought it. When mother sent me to the store, she would write down a list of names of women who were clean.

Penny candy was a big seller. It was displayed in a large case and came in many flavors. A child would stand for a long time deciding which piece to choose.

Cheese came in wheels and was cut in wedges by a hinged knife. The cheese was shipped in round wooden boxes. Women would pad and cover the boxes to make a stool for their children.

An interesting part of the store was the eye glasses case. The case had thin trays with padded slots that held the glasses. The biggest seller was wire framed and had very small lenses and straight bows. Another style was named Pince-Nez. They had nose pads that opened on springs. The glasses were placed on the bridge of the nose and the springs released. The pads would then pinch into the nose and hold the glasses in place. Another style of the Pince-Nez type had a ribbon attached on one side of the frame. The ribbon was placed around the neck and women let their glasses dangle when not in use. Men would place them in a pocket. A Bible was placed close to the glasses case. When people's arms were no longer long enough to see to read they would buy glasses. They would try on different strengths of glasses until they could read the print in the Bible.

Vinegar was pumped out of a wooden barrel with a wooden pump. Kerosene was then called coal oil and was stored in a back room in a metal barrel. The pump was on top of the barrel and one turn of the handle measured out one gallon. A potato was pushed on the spout of the kerosene can to keep the kerosene from slopping out.

Baked goods and meat were not sold in the grocery store. They were sold at the bakery and meat market.

All groceries were stacked on shelves behind the counters and display cases. The clerk would bring each item to the counter as they were ordered. Before electricity, the clerk had to carry a kerosene lamp when it was dark.

Groceries were not placed in large sacks so women carried market baskets or pulled groceries home in small wagons.

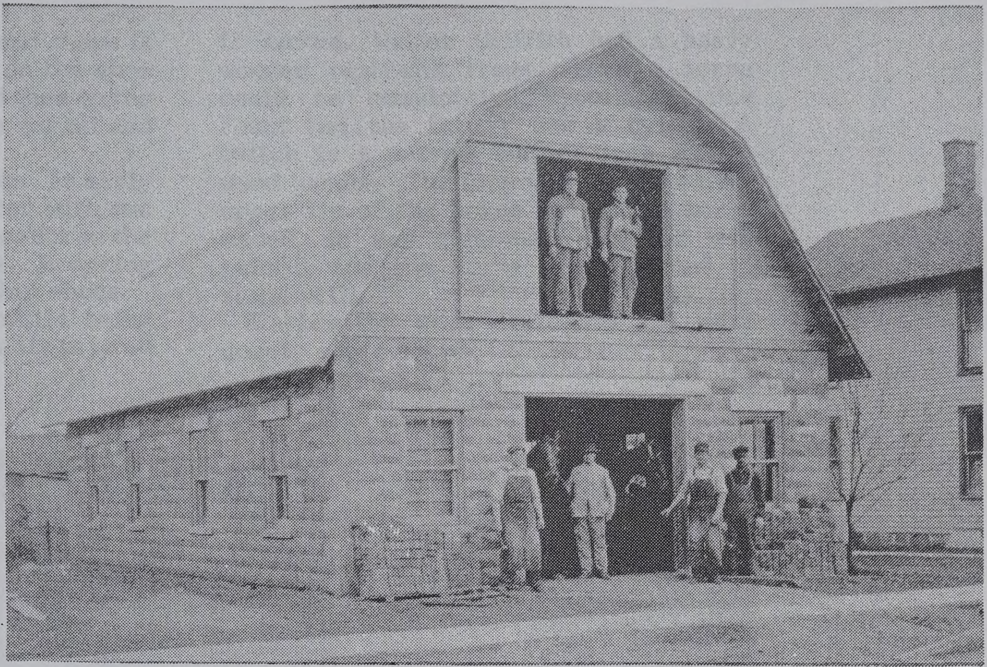
Tobacco was a big seller. Cigars and chewing tobacco were carried in many brands. Chewing tobacco came in loose and pressed types. Pressed tobacco was called plug. It came in large pieces that were marked so the plugs could be cut the proper size. A hinged bladed plug cutter sat on the counter. My grandfather said he chewed plug when he was young. He quit after he found the end of a finger in a plug.

Dairy products or fresh produce were not stocked due to no refrigeration.

Coffee was sold in bulk in both green and roasted beans. The grocer would grind the roasted coffee in a hand cranked grinder that had a drawer in the bottom. The ground coffee was then sacked. My grandmother preferred green coffee. She roasted the beans in her wood range oven and ground it in a small coffee grinder. She claimed it tasted better.

Grocers were friendly and an essential part of the community.

SEGARS
CANDLES
TEAS



The original blacksmith shop on Church Street was built by Ivan and Hershel Day about 1915.

Blacksmiths

by Bob Swift

Blacksmiths were important to our community, especially to the farmers. If a farmer's equipment broke down, he needed repairs immediately. They were not highly mechanical so every hour counted. Blacksmiths were very accomodating and would repair or replace a part as soon as possible.

Hamilton had three blacksmiths. Art Ingram had a shop in the south part of town but didn't stay in business very long. Hershel and Ivan Day built the shop that now houses the CTN Complex. They in turn sold the shop to Walter Griffith. Orv Foutz had a shop west of the creek on the north side of the street in the east part of town.

Walter Griffith was not only a blacksmith but a good machinist. He had a huge gasoline engine in the back of his shop, that had two flywheels, and used it for heavy work. He was a good welder and was an expert on a metal lathe. In the spring he was busy repairing and sharpening plow points. Before grain harvest, he sharpened and replaced blades in cutter bars. If binder canvas needed repaired or replaced, he did it. He also stocked gears and parts for binders. He designed and made metal parts for many types of machinery and equipment.

Orv Foutz specialized in replacing steel tires or wagons. He would remove old tires and measure the wheel with a rolling wheel ruler. He would then cut heavy strap steel that was the proper width to the correct length. The steel was placed in a machine that rolled the steel into a perfect circle. The ends were put in the forge and heated red hot. He leveled each end and welded them together on the anvil and it was hard to tell where the weld was. He laid the tire outside on the ground and placed short pieces of wood in a V shape around the tire. Kerosene was poured on the wood and lit with a match. When the tire was hot it was picked up with iron tools that were slotted and placed on the wheel. He then drove the hot tire on the wheel with a sledge. As soon as the tire was in place, it was set in water to keep the wheel from catching fire and to shrink the tire together to the wheel. If I was handy, I helped him place the tire on the wheel.

In bad weather, I usually went to the blacksmith shop to watch them work. My favorite was to watch them shoe horses.

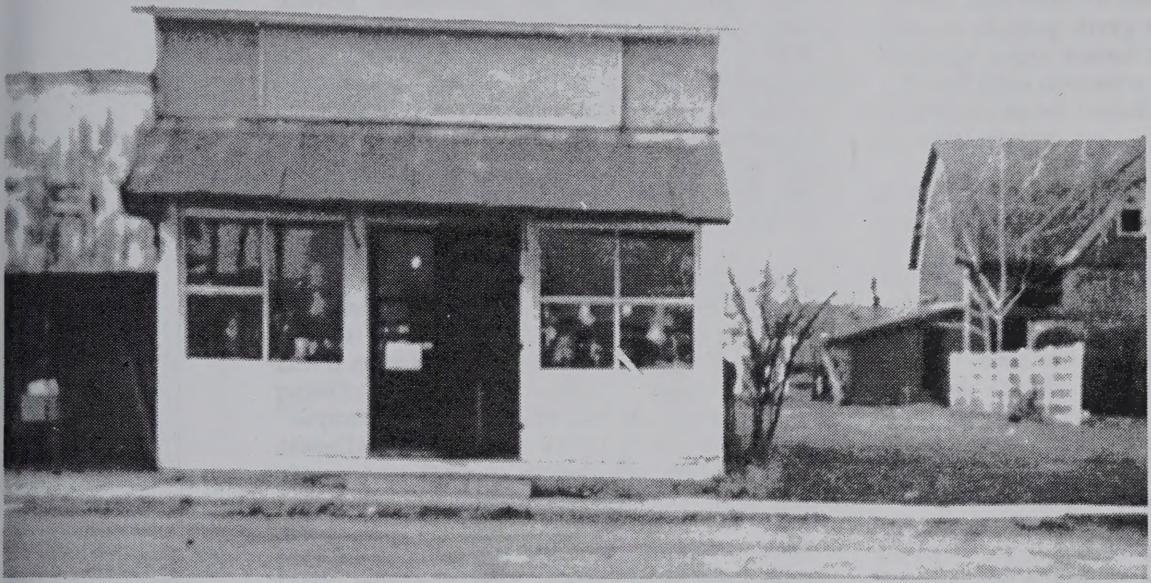
Blacksmiths always wore a leather apron that was split in the center so he could hold a horse's hoof between his legs above his knees. He would take off the old shoe and trim off the excess hoof around the edge with pincer type cutters and file it smooth. The inside of the hoof would be trimmed and the hoof filed flat. He always picked the right sized shoe and then tried it on for fit. If the shoe needed changed,

he would heat it in the forge and shape it on the anvil. He then nailed on the shoe with special nails and clinched them on the top side. The excess nail was cut off and filed.

Horses were shod twice a year. In early winter, the shoes were replaced with one that had heavy, sharp lugs or calks so the horse would not slip on the ice. In spring they were replaced with regular shoes.

Horses had to stand still while being shod. A blacksmith could be badly injured if kicked. Walter Griffith had a heavy wooden restraint frame where a horse could be completely immobilized. Orv Foutz had the farmer use a twitch. A twitch is a narrow leather loop with a wood handle. The loop was placed on the upper lip of the horse and if the horse moved, it was tightened down. It was painful and the horse soon learned to stand still.

Blacksmiths were craftsmen and were deeply appreciated.



The Beecher Tin Shop. It was next door to Jim Oberlin's ice storage building, (partly seen on left).

Beecher Tin Shop

Truman A. Beecher was born on May 28, 1837, to Truman and Hannah (Sloane) Beecher. In 1845 he came with his father to Franklin Township then to Albion. His mother died in 1850. His father died on the overland route to California (traveling for a company he formed) shortly after. Their children were John Sloane, Mary, Philamone, Henry and Truman A. Their maternal grandfather was John Slaone, distinguished figure in Ohio and national history.

Truman was eight when he came to DeKalb County. After his parents died, he returned to Wooster, Ohio and lived with Grandpa John Sloane. As a youth he learned the trade of tinner, and in 1858, on coming to Steuben County and locating in Hamilton, he opened a tinner's shop. He was in business steadily for over fifty years, until he retired in 1915.

He married Statira Brown May 4, 1862. They had ten children. Son, James Beecher followed his father in the tinner business.

Ice House

by Waldo Stout

The first ice house was where the trailer next to Mrs. Rose's now sits. It was moved to Ball Lake when Jim Oberlin bought it from Harley Griffith. Ball Lake didn't freeze over because the lake was low and there were many weeds. It was a warm winter, so ice was hauled from Hamilton lake and then a year or two later the ice house was moved to a property just south of the cemetery. The ice was stored in a building downtown next to the Tin Shop.

People would come and dish out ice. Jim Oberlin sat under a tin canopy on an old car seat. He would fall asleep and you had to wake him to get ice.

Ice was stored under saw dust and, therefore, it would last through the summer.

Barber Shops

by Bob Swift

When I was a boy, barber shops were the Holy Grail for the men. Women absolutely refused to go in a barber shop and that pleased the men. Women said that in a shop men talked dirty or about women, and they were right.

The oldest shop in town was owned by father and son, O. P. and Grover Brown. It was a great place for loafers. Old men played checkers and made their own checker boards. They laid out the squares on a sheet of cardboard and inked in the dark ones. Pop bottle caps were used for checkers. One side placed the cap with the top up, the other side with the cork up. They would sit for a long time before making a move then the game would pick up. Good checker players claimed they had a system and played for blood.

Brownie Kepler was another barber and his shop was next to dad's store in the Malone Building. He was a swell guy and lived across the street from us. He had a painting on the shop wall called "September Morn." It was of a young lady standing in shallow water with her dress above her knees. Women thought it was horrible, but the men thought it was hot stuff. By today's standards it was nothing. Brownie was a small man with a large stomach that lapped over his belt. Some of the eligible bachelors in town were George Fee, Merl Westfall, Frank Carpenter, Charlie Radabaugh, Pete Lewis, Orlie Willenar, Sugar Fee and others that age. They purchased a pair of heavy police suspenders and made Brownie wear them. They said they were afraid his pants would come down.

One of the boys came in the shop with a pair of new gloves. In confidence, Brownie told George Fee to put lather and hair in them. Instead, George took Brownie's gloves from his coat and put lather and hair in his gloves. They were always playing dirty tricks on each other. Brownie later moved to Butler.

Sim Dirrim opened a shop in the south end of the old hotel building and was there for several years.

Frosty Stout was badly hurt in an automobile accident. He was driving with his arm on the window sill and was side swiped by another car. It badly damaged his elbow and it took him a long time to recover. When he was well enough he opened a shop in the west part ot the old hotel. Most of us young fellows preferred to have Frosty cut our hair so we didn't look peeled. Frosty liked to talk about hunting and fishing so it was a pleasure to get a hair cut.

Saturday night was bedlam for the barbers. Farmers would come to town in droves to get a hair cut and shave. They were given a number and waited until their number was called. It was often midnight before a barber could close.

Hair cuts were 25 cents and shaves 10 cents.

Harger's Meat Market

by Bob Swift

Riley Harger owned the local meat market that was located north of the Malone building.

Riley and his son Jim butchered the animals at the farm and would hang them to cool in back of the shop. He had a small shed where he salted down hides until they were shipped.

A whole side of spare ribs were sold for 10 cents and liver was 5 cents a pound. Mother would send me to the shop with 25 cents to buy meat for company. Women had a fit when the price of steak went to 20 cents a pound.

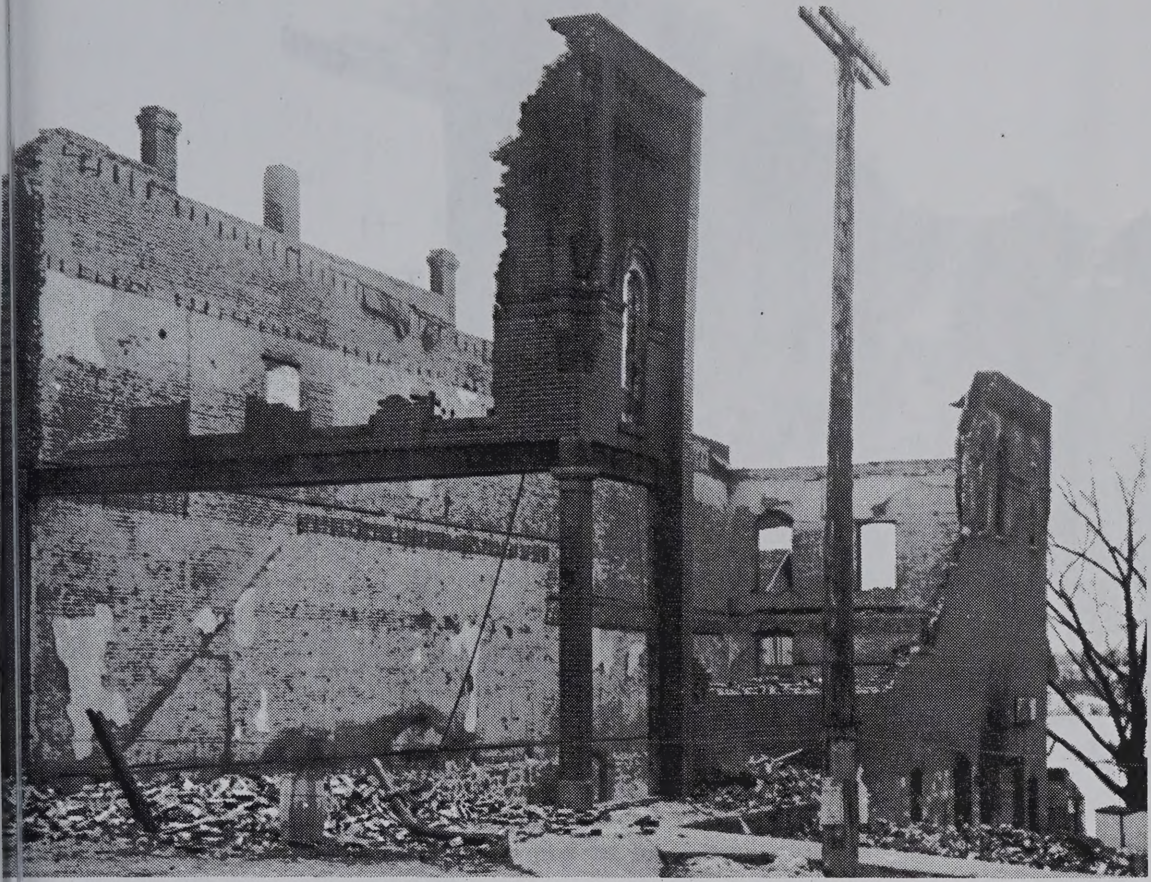
Riley made the best bologna I ever ate. In the summer, he made it outdoors and when I smelled it I would go over there and he would give me a taste.

Most town people did not butcher their own meat so Riley did a good business.

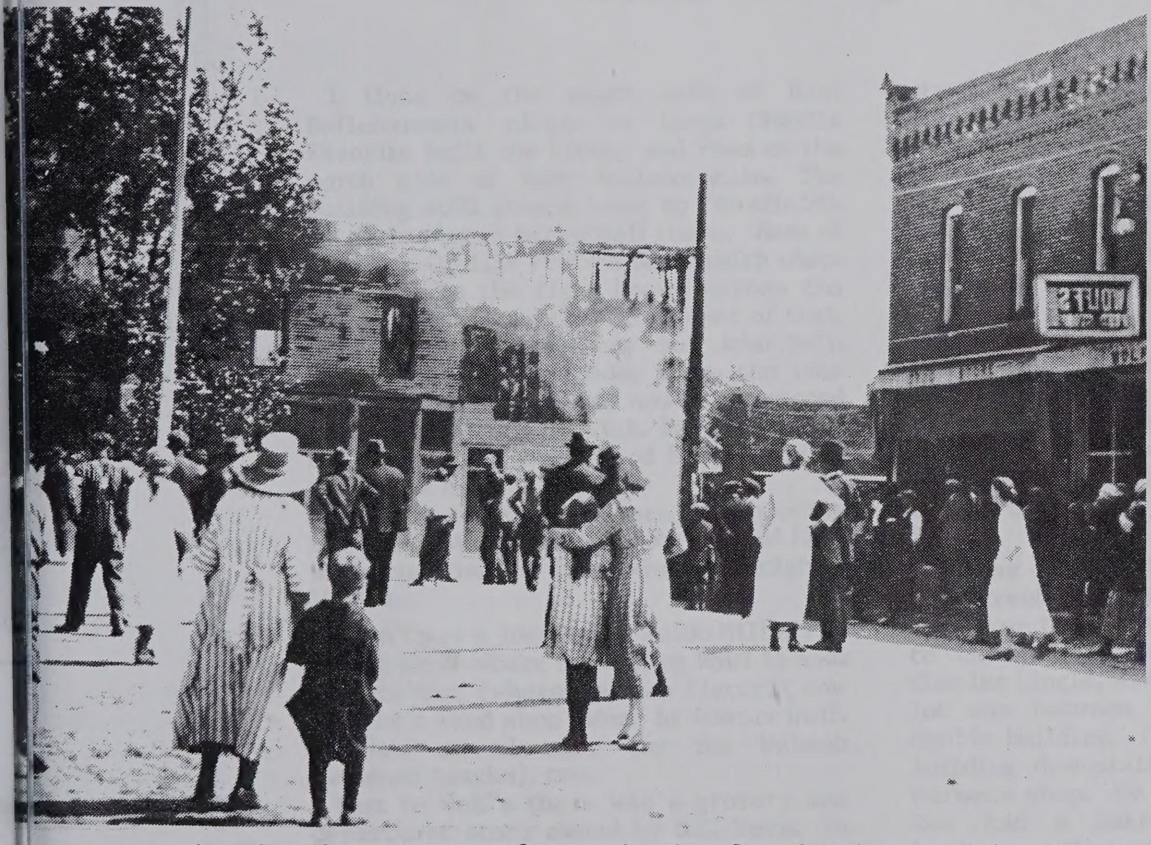
Jim Harger did custom butchering and most of it was cattle. Farmers usually butchered hogs but cattle was too much to handle.

Riley died in the twenties. He was the great grandfather of Dean.

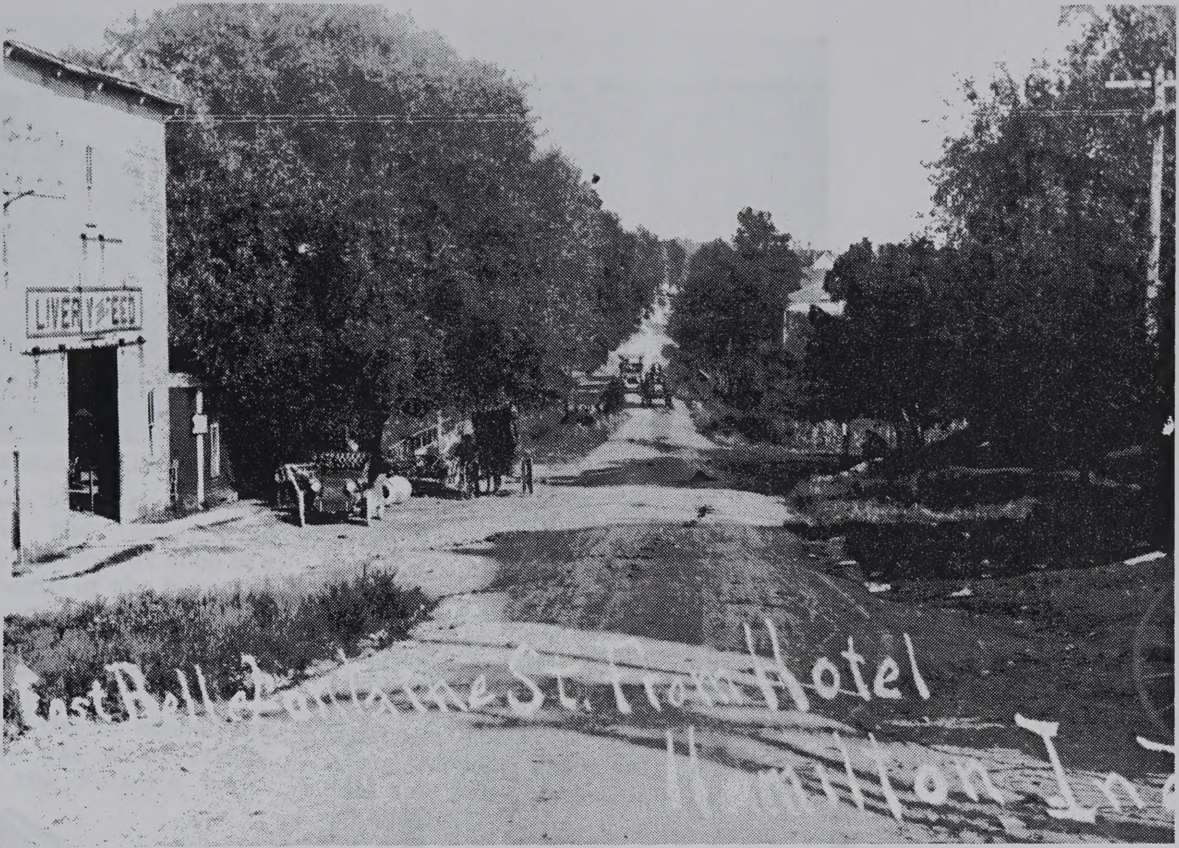
THE HAMILTON
MEAT MARKET
J. Harger, Prop.



The Leader building owned by E.E. Swaidner was destroyed by fire in 1912.



ctators watch as Hamilton volunteer firemen battle a fire that destroyed the Fish Lake el in the early 1900's.



Looking east on East Bellefountain from the main intersection, early 1900's.

Remembering Downtown

by Mary Till

I lived on the south side of East Bellefountain close to town. Charlie Favorite built the Livery and Feed on the north side of East Bellefountain. The building still stands (next to Pittsfield). We girls played basketball there. East of this was Orville Foutz's Blacksmith shop. He lived in the first house across the bridge. The Favorites lived east of that. Next was Margaret Fee's dad, John Ball. (He owned the boat house along the lake where the boardwalk is now.) He rented boats and sold bait. C.B. Dirrim docked the Vella Mae there. Ford Swift lived in the house east of Ball's.

Dick Slentz had a tie barn (now housing Don Peel's Auto) on the south side of East Bellefountain. He lived where McKnight's live now.

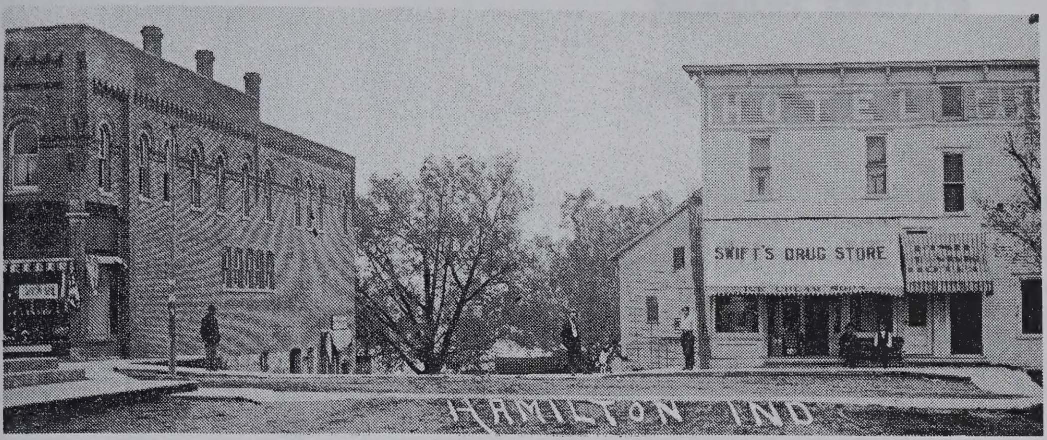
When I was a young girl, Waldo Miller ran a drug store where the Mixing Bowl is now. Next to that (where Hamman Electric now is) was a seed shop owned by Gustav Wolf. He had an elevator (by the Wabash Railroad tracks), too.

Next to Wolf's there was a grocery and department store owned by D.C. Hess. In the next building (which is no longer standing) there was the Post Office and C.B. Dirrim had a jewelry sales and repair shop. (In later years when the bank moved to the east side of 427, there was a telephone office upstairs.)

John Dargue had a grocery and notions store in the building next to Dirrim's. In the next building was Harger's Meat Market.

There was a vacant spot next to Harger's. South of that there was a little long building where Harley Griffith ran a picture show. Vera Stuller played the piano for the shows. On the very corner where the Malone Building was later built (1916) there was a house owned by J.C. Farley.

Across 427 was the Odd Fellow Hall. On the street level there was a hardware store run by William Cook (they lived next to the funeral home). His son-in-law, Charles Lingle, was his partner. A vacant lot was between here and a two story double building. On the south side of the building downstairs John Zeigler had a harness shop. On the north side, Warren Cox had a bakery. Between the two businesses there was a stairway up to Dr.



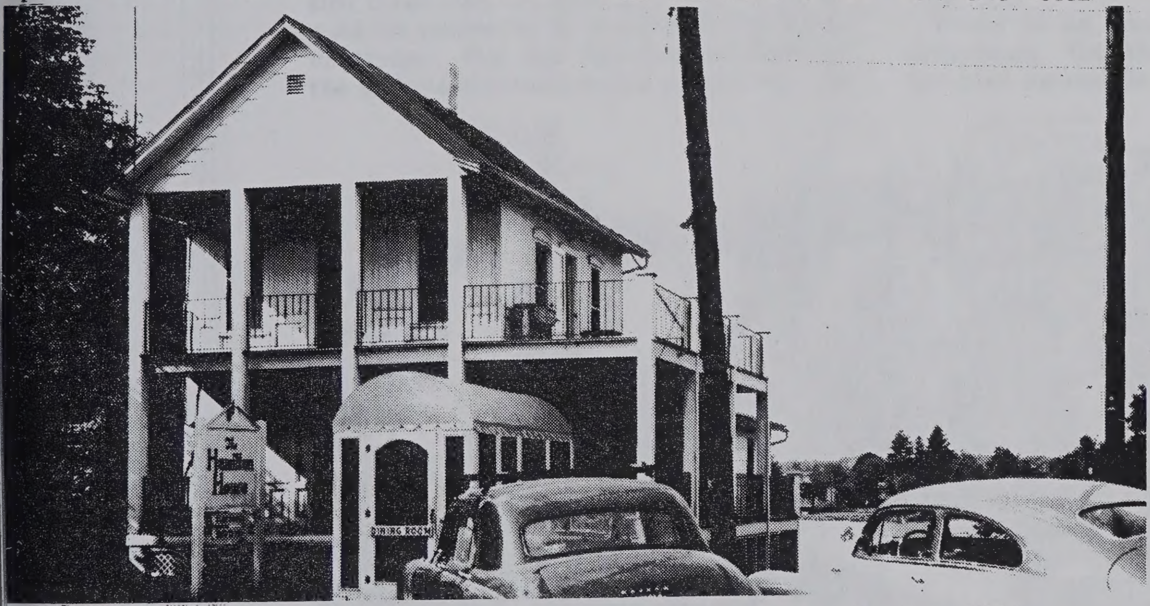
View of Swaidner building (on left), and Fish Lake Hotel (on right).

Bernard's office above the harness shop. Cox's lived above the bakery. Ed Grambling had a one chair barber shop in a little building just north of the bakery.

In the vacant lot north of this, picture shows were shown in the summertime. There were ice cream socials and auctions there, too.

The building north of the lot housed the Hamilton Bank. There was an apartment upstairs. Next was the Fuller's home. They had a cream station. The Hamilton Hotel that was owned by Doc Cameron was on the southwest corner of the main intersection.

In the very early days, Charlie Swift had a drug store in the southwest corner of the Fish Lake Hotel building that was located where 427 now runs north of the main intersection. Then the road ran right along the edge of the mill pond. The Old Mill was north of the Fish Lake Hotel.



The Hamilton House when owned by Robert Weaver. He bought it in 1946.

Hamilton House

by Mary Till

The Hamilton House was built by a Dr. 'etrie in 1860 as a hospital. About the ime the Liberty Pole was put up, Mr. and rs. John Renner lived in the front of the ld building. People called it the "Bee ive" then. Elizabeth Hathaway lived in ıe back apartment on the main floor. The pstairs was used as a storage center. here was a path on the east side of the ıilding that went down toward the lake past the doorway of the basement apartment of Mary Crow. She took in washing and ironing. She had a son Glenn and three daughters, Mable, Audrey and Bertha. Robert H. Weaver of Auburn bought the building in 1946. He fixed it up and put a restaurant in the lower level.

Evan Richey lived in the house west of the Hamilton House when I was a school girl. She had a hat shop in the east side of the house.

Special Events

Fourth of July

by Bob Swift

Fourth of July was bang-up day for us boys. I always saved at least $5.00 from working in the onion patch and it bought a lot of fireworks.

Bert Kissinger sold fireworks in the drug store, so when he received his shipment I was one of his first customers.

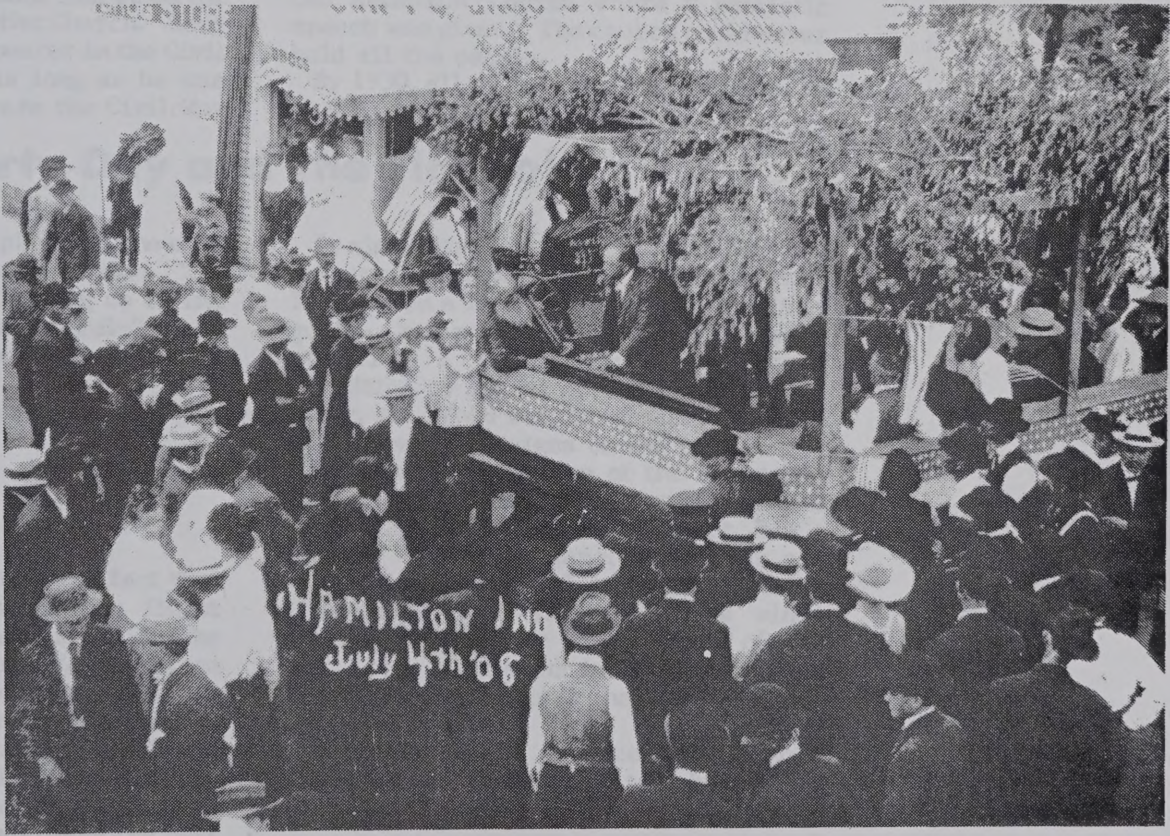
The main firecrackers were two inches long. We would place a can over a firecracker and light the fuse. The can would blow about fifteen feet in the air. I always had to buy one package of five inch crackers and they were only fired on special occasions. I bought roman candles and skyrockets to fire at night. Girls bought tiny lady crackers, flower pots, and sparklers and that kind of sissy stuff.

One year the hardware store sold a cheap, cast, blank cartridge .22 pistol. Boys bought them so they would have a gun that fired like the cowboys. We found that a BB fit perfectly in the end of the blank cartridge. One day dad saw us shooting the BB loaded pistols in the mill creek. He took them to the store and broke them with a hammer. When the hardware found out about it they never sold any more.

Some of the men had firecracker fights. They would stand on the old hotel corner and the drug store corner and throw firecrackers at each other. No one was ever hurt, but they did a lot of toe dancing. Among the warriors were: Bull Taylor, Harry Wolf, Sugar Fee, Woody Kepler, Ernie Schmidt, Shorty Heston, Pete Lewis, Dick Herrick and Nick Chard.

At dusk we would walk to the island bridge so we could see the fireworks on the island and Cold Springs. Then we would go home and shoot our roman candles and skyrockets. The best way to shoot a skyrocket was to place it in a piece of eavespout. One night a skyrocket curved and lit on the wood roof of Ott Brown's barn. We held our breath until the fire went out.

There is no doubt that fireworks are dangerous, but there were no serious injuries around here.



Fourth of July celebration in downtown Hamilton in 1908.

Memorial Day

by Bob Swift

Memorial Day was probably the biggest day of the year in Hamilton in the early twenties. The holiday was started by Union Civil War veterans through their organization, "The Grand Army of the Republic." There were still some Civil War veterans living in and around Hamilton so it was a great day for them. They called it Decoration Day.

An essential part of the celebration was a fife and drum corp. People called it a Buckskin Band. Our local band comprised of Jim Cherry who played the fife, Burr Lemmon who played the bass drum, my father and Jack Sewell played the snare drums. They would hold a practice session in front of the furniture store about 9:00 a.m. They would then board the passenger boat, "Vella May" and would go to Island Park, Penn Park and Cold Springs. They would give a concert at each resort and announce the program of the afternoon.

At parade time, they would line up on the side street by the Methodist Church. Hank Foutz, who was a color bearer in the Civil War, carried the flag as long as he was able. Following Hank were the Civil War veterans, then Veterans of World War I and then the Buckskin Band. Following the band was a long line of children, each carrying a bouquet of flowers.

People came to Hamilton by the hundreds wearing their Sunday best. They lined the parade route from one end to the other.

At the proper time, the band would start playing and the parade would march to the lake. They would hold a service in memory of Navy veterans and some of the children would scatter flowers on the lake. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the band would start playing and the parade would march to the cemetery. A service would be held in memory of Army and Marine veterans. All veterans' graves were marked with small American flags and the children placed a bouquet of flowers on each grave.

Later in the day, people would gather in the Methodist Church where a patriotic speech was given. The church could never hold all the people.

By 1930, all of the Civil War veterans in Hamilton had passed away.

Liberty Day and The Flagpole

In 1916 a flagpole was placed at the main intersection of downtown Hamilton. The accounts of the events leading up to the dedication of the "Liberty Pole" were recorded in the Hamilton News as follows:

Utica N.Y., August 9, 1916
Editor Hamilton News
Hamilton, Ind.

Dear Sir and Friend:

I wish you would advertise the fact that Hamilton will have one of the finest Liberty Poles in Indiana, and it will be up-to-date, powerful electric lights on top to show Old Glory on special occasions. I, having raised the largest liberty pole in the world in the Grand Canyon, and putting Old Glory at the highest point in the United States, also on Eiffel Tower, in Paris, shall use the best of my skill to give Hamilton something to be proud of.

I also wish to thank John for his endeavors and patriotism in this matter. It has been a long felt want, especially to guide automobiles to take proper direction. I would suggest your town committee to act on an ordinance to fine autos, etc. when not doing same, as there will be suitable signs on the pole.

Enclosed find picture of the dangerous job we have we have been doing the last two months, two large spires of the St. John's Church, rebuilding same; all copper and tile, not an ounce of paint, being used. Have cut ropes thirteen times since starting. I enclose rough draft of the pole I propose to erect in Hamilton, and its features. John Renner has the original proposal I made.

Thanking you in advance for all your trouble, and trusting you will have a big crowd at the celebration.

I remain your fraternally
THE HUMAN FLY
Fred Sutherland

Pictured (from left to right) breaking ground for the flagpole are: Geroge Jones, Anthony Miller, Truman Beecher, Dol Renner's father and Andrew Goudy.

The Hamilton New's account of the Liberty Day celebration went as follows:

Liberty Day was one of the biggest days in Hamilton for many years. The crowd is estimated at from 2,000 to 3,000 people who came to witness the raising of the 100 foot Liberty Pole on the public square.

At 11:55 a.m. the pole was started upward and a few minutes past twelve it was standing, amid cheering of the crowd. There was no hitch and accidents to mar the day's greatest attraction - the raising of the pole. It now stands on the public square, a thing of beauty and a monument to the citizens of the town of Hamilton.

On the top is the eagle, the weather vane, the letters showing the stranger the directions; north, south, east and west, and below these the large ball. Just below all these Old Glory floats to the breezes. At night a row of seven electric lights are run to the top.

The day was full of amusements prepared by the different committees in charge. The streets were lined with stands and gave all appearances of a big street fair. The crowd was a jolly one and everybody seemed to be happy.

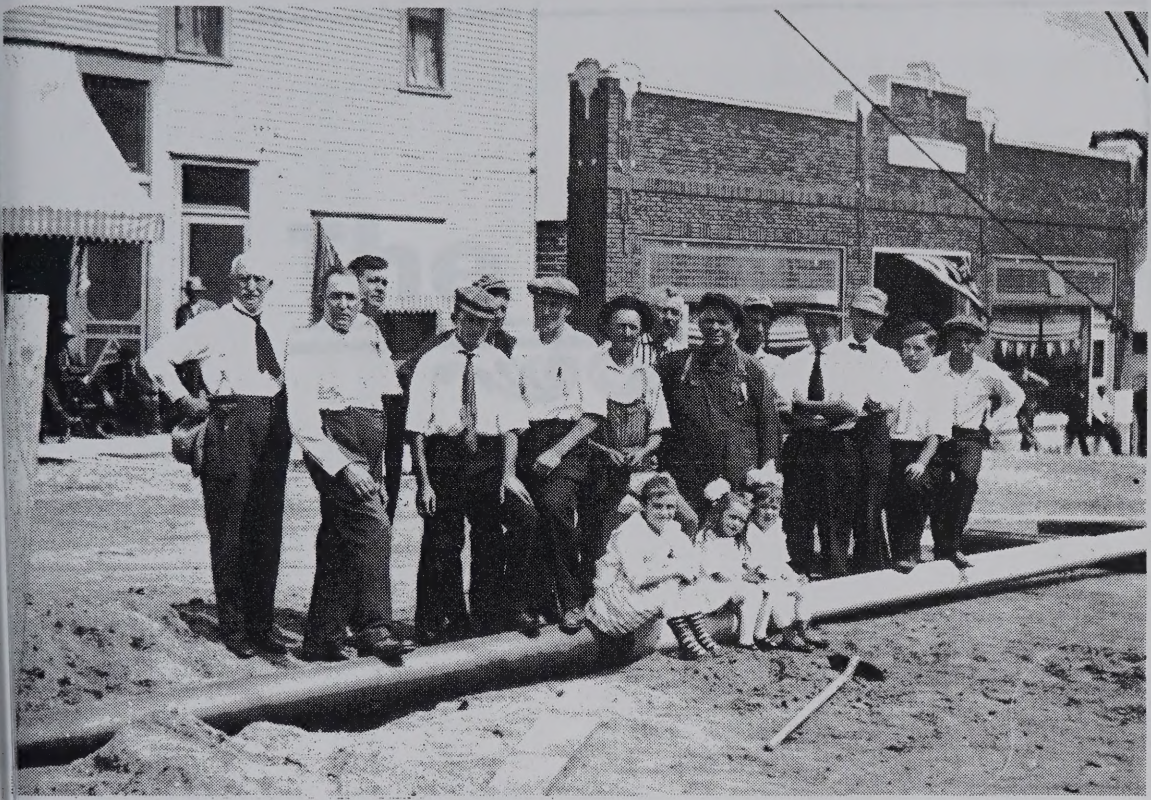
In the afternoon the big flag was carried by a number of girls to the foot of the pole and was sent to the top, where it floated to the breezes, to the music of the Butler Band which played "The Star Spangled Banner" as the flag was being run up...About six o'clock the little daughter of the Human Fly went to the top of the pole amid the cheers of the crowd. She was up at the top for several minutes and waved her flag and carried on conversations with those below with no fear at being high up.

The idea of this pole was first mentioned by Fred Sutherland, The Human Fly. Mr. Sutherland was very enthusiastic and did all his work without any charges, and also presented the town with a beautiful flag. It is no more than right that the flag should be run to the top each day in appreciation of his services. On Saturday Mr. Sutherland climbed the pole and gave it a coat of paint as he came down.

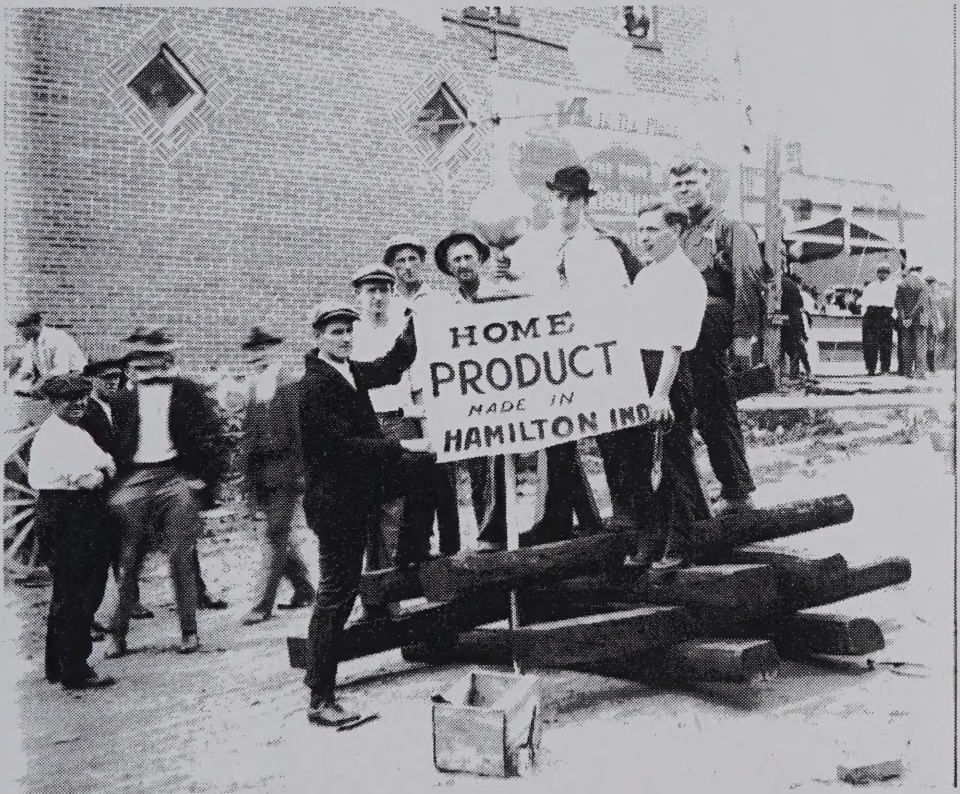
Liberty Day has passed and the highest Liberty Pole in Indiana stands on the public square in Hamilton where thousands of travelers will see it.

The original flagpole was removed from the main intersection several years ago. The idea of putting up a new liberty pole was proposed by Polly Racy who organized "Old Fashioned Sunday." The community fund raising, held on August 30, 1981, included a hog roast and several other entertaining activities.

On Sunday July 4, 1983, Senator Richard Worman dedicated the new flagpole located at the corner of Church and 427, adjacent to the town hall.



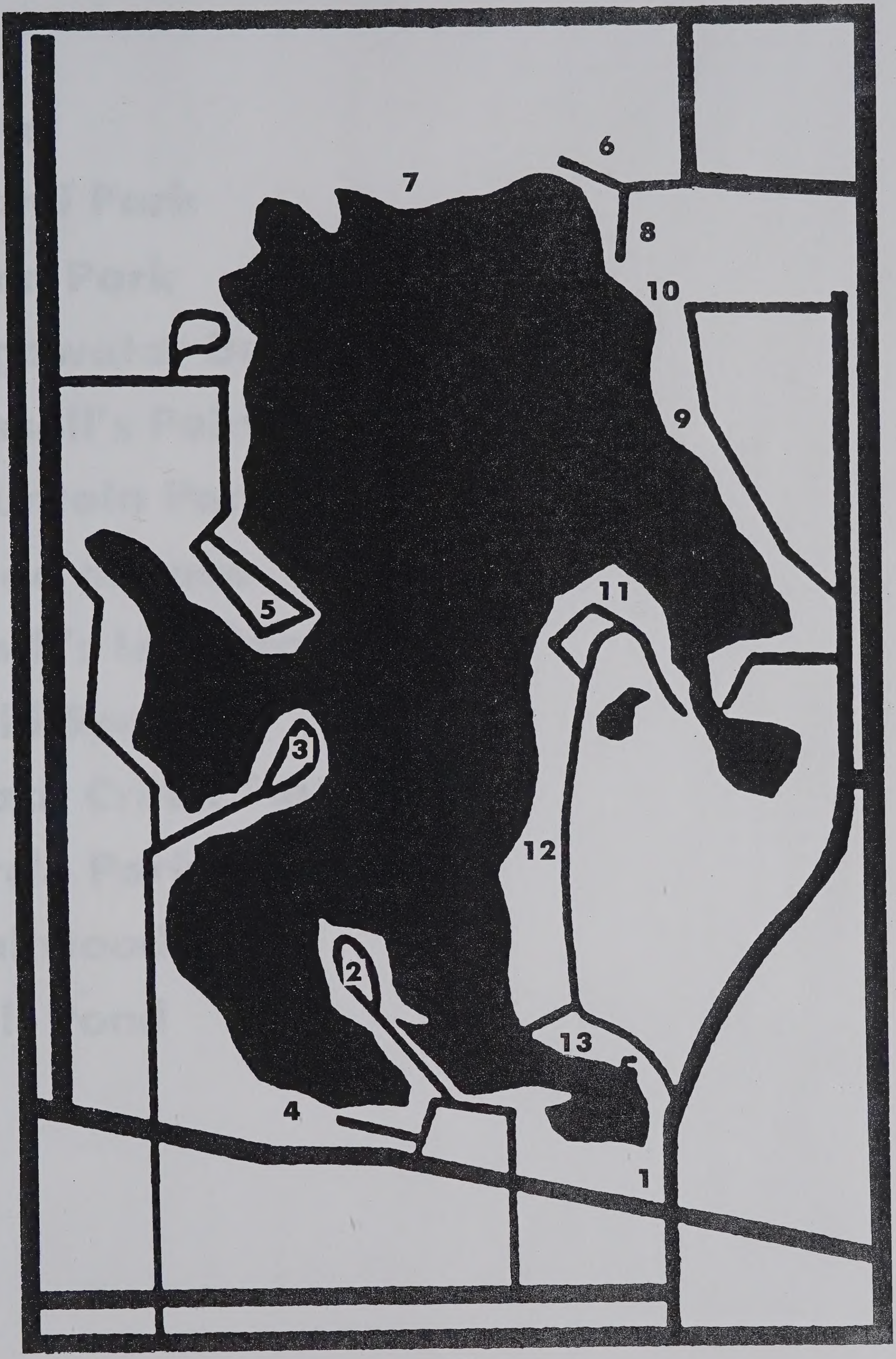
anding behind the flagpole are, (from left to right): Gus Wolf, Oliver Brown, Ed Swaidner, arles Lingle, Tom Day, Girt Gnagy, John Renner, Bill Helms, Fred Sutherland, Ott Brown, ger Day, Bick Dirrim, Jim Beecher and Hershel Day. The little girls are Sutherland's ughters.



Hamilton men (from left to right): Charles Favorite, Cleve Rose, Nick Chard, unknown, unknown, Virgil Hagerty, Hershel Day, Ott Brown, John Renner, Ivan Day and Jim Beecher hold weather vane for flagpole top.

The Lake

Hamilton Lake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Key to the Lake Map

1) Town
2) Island Park
3) Penn Park
4) Edgewater Beach
5) Russell's Point
6) Fountain Park
7) Head of Lake
8) Clark's Landing
9) Cold Springs
10) Black Creek Flats
11) Circle Park
12) Oakwood Park
13) Mill Pond

Hamilton Lake Once Called Fish Lake

Hamilton Lake, once known as Fish Lake, shares with Clear Lake, the distinction of being the fourth largest lake in Indiana. The Indiana Lake Guide lists the acreage of both as 765 square. The bottom of Hamilton Lake is gravel and the depth varies from 15 feet to 62 feet. The principal stream feeding the lake is Black Creek which empties into it from the northeast. Also, during high water considerable water is fed in by Dirrim Creek at the Tamarac and Kanous Creek in Muskrat Bay. The outlet is Fish Creek, just north of Hamilton, which seeks the waters of the St. Joseph, then to the Maumee and Lake Erie.

This is a natural lake. It was once several small lakes that were made one when the water level was raised to provide water power. Nicanor Munson first owned the water power on Hamilton Lake when he entered that tract of land plus the several hundred acres where the town of Hamilton is located. That was in 1836. Then in 1837 Mr. Tuttle, representing the Steuben County Company from out east, purchased the water rights, and a dam and level was built. The water level was raised nine feet, combining three bodies of water.

Sydney Gambia, also an agent for the company, built a grist mill and later purchased the water power of the company. In time, a saw mill replaced the grist mill. In 1859, John Fee, who bought out Sydney Gambia, built a flouring mill on the old saw mill site. Later the water power rights were gained by the Fort Wayne Power Company. In time it was purchased by Girt L. Gnagy and Dr. Frank Cameron, who used the power to generate electrical current. When State Road 1 was constructed, the State Highway Department acquired the water outlet on Hamilton Lake.

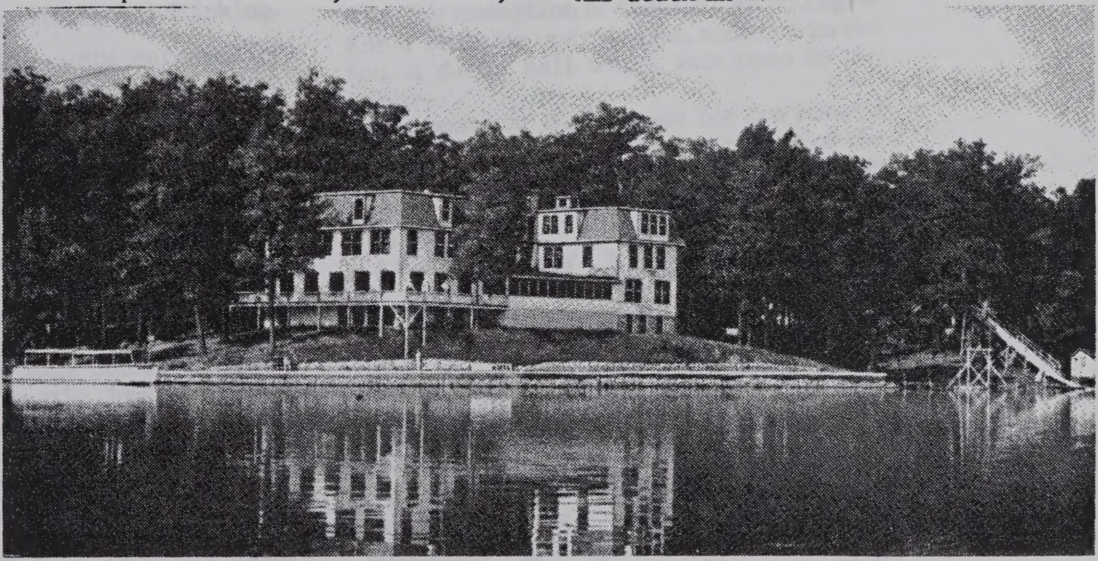
Steuben Circuit Court rendered the decision on the water level of the lake on September 30, 1916, after controversy between some of the property owners and the mill owners. The level set at the time is the same as the one set by the division of Water Resources Department of conservation in 1947 at an elevation of 898.83 feet, mean sea level datum.

The lake was appropriately called Fish Lake because every species of fish caught in the waters of Steuben County are caught here. The natural formation makes it a challenge to any fisherman.

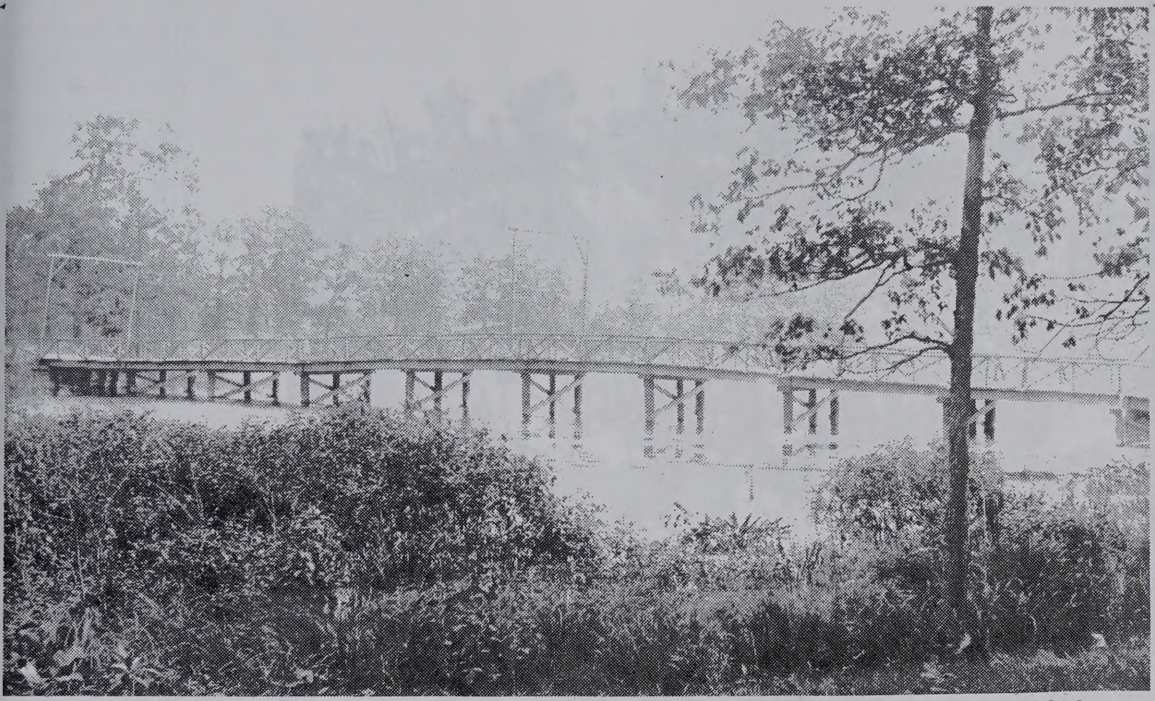
Island Park

Island Park is a twelve acre island in the southwest part of the lake. Its first owner was Frank Fee. He sold it to Jeremiah Gnagy in 1889. He and his wife, Rebecca (Houlton) Gnagy (her parents were the first settlers in DeKalb County) started one of the first resorts on Hamilton Lake as a camp site for revival meetings, picnics and political rallies, it had boats, a feed barn, a stand and a working tent.

In 1913, the island was plotted to lake lots by High Henry and William Thomas of Auburn. They built the Island Park Hotel and constructed a bridge from the island to the mainland. It was purchased by Charles Hanes in 1916 and developed and operated by him and his wife, Louise until his death in 1941.



An early photo of the Island Park Hotel.



This rustic bridge joined Island Park to the mainland. It was in existence from 1913 until 1940.

Log Cabin in the Park

The following article is from the Hamilton News, September 23, 1960. It was written by David Hanes as a "Local History" assignment for Letha Teegardin's history class. His sources of information were Sadie Merchant, Clif Johnston and Robert L. Hanes.

On the south side of Hamilton Lake lies an island of about twelve acres.

Before 1900 the only house close to the island was a log cabin. The cabin had not been built to live in. Instead it was used as a rendezvous for gambling and drinking.

The activities at the cabin were really booming around 1900. The people who frequented the place were living it up. Many people were opposed to the cabin. They looked upon it as we do some of our rough night spots. In 1901 the cabin was burned. It was thought that someone burned it on purpose because of its bad name. It was never rebuilt.

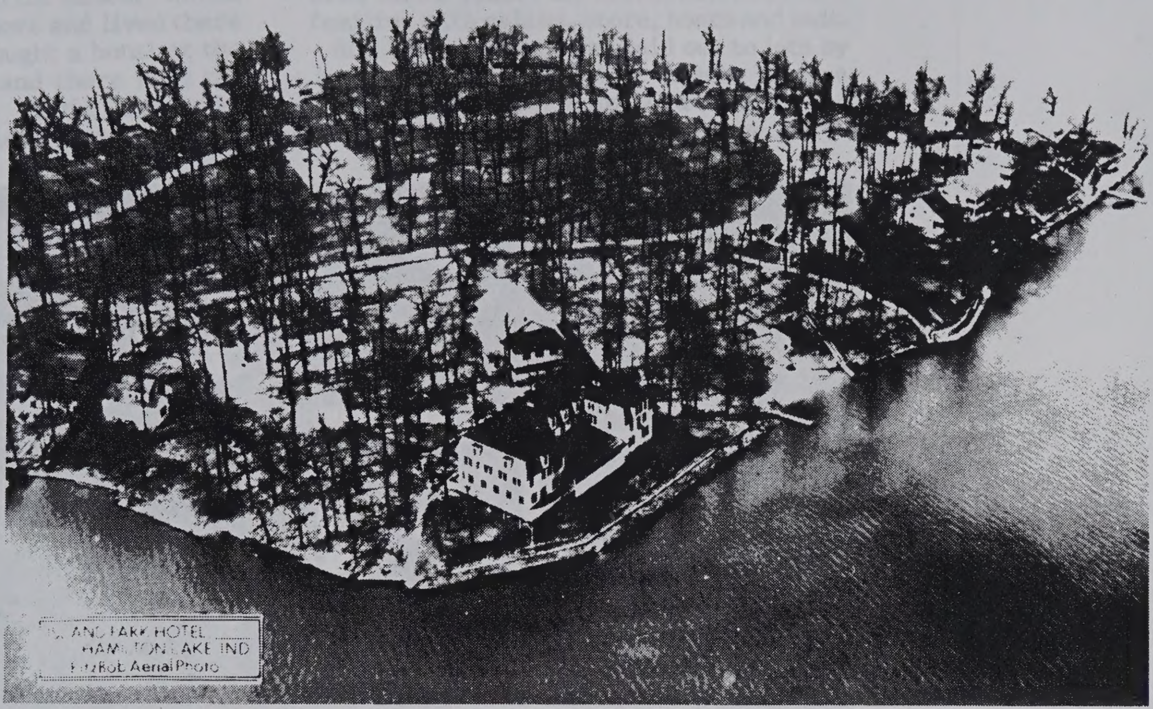
Two men, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Henry, bought the 12 acre island and built an inn. They built a bridge made out of trees. It was known as a "rustic bridge." This connected the island to the mainland. This bridge was between 80 and 100 feet long and was wide enough for one car to cross at a time. A walk was built on each side of the road bridge for pedestrians. The water under the center of the bridge was about six feet deep. It was a very good place to fish so it was a common sight to see 10 to 12 fish lines tangled in the light wires that went over the bridge. Some time around 1940 the road from the island to the Bellefountain Road was turned over to the county for maintenance. The county removed the wooden bridge and built a causeway of fill dirt with a small cement bridge to connect the road to the island. This formed an opening for the water from one part of the lake to reach another part.

About the year 1913, Mr. Charles Hanes leased the hotel from Mr. Hi Henry and in the year 1916 Mr. Hanes bought the inn from Mr. Henry and the rest of the island with the exception of about three cottages. For a while he operated, in addition to the inn, a dance hall which was open to the public.

The beach at the inn was for the benefit of the public and out in the center of the island were public picnic tables. Many people came to spend the day picnicking and swimming.

After a few years, Mr. Hanes decided that he preferred the hotel business to the dance hall and the beach, so he raised the roof on the one-story dance hall making it a two-story building and divided it into rooms large enough to house about fifty people. He then developed the bathing beach for the use of the hotel guests.

A great number of the guests were families from all over the central west. Sometimes grandparents, parents and children of one family would come to spend their vacation and have a family reunion. In order that all of the different age



Early aerial view of Island park.

groups would have something to do, Mr. Hanes maintained about 24 row boats, a bathing beach with a toboggan slide, docks and diving tower, a tennis court, a croquet court, two shuffle board courts, a horse shoe court, a closed-in play area for little children, and at one time an 18-hole miniature golf course. There were ferry boat rides at night thus providing a romantic ending for a very busy and happy day.

In 1928 Mr. Hanes built in the center of the island a small dance hall and a soda fountain. These were open to the public. Since there were about 20 cottages on the island, a number of the cottagers objected to a public dance hall. They brought a law suit against Mr. Hanes.

As a settlement to the law suit, Mr. Hanes removed the dance hall. He sold it to Mr. Fred Bergman who moved it, during the winter across the ice, to Willow Point where it is still being used as a storage for boats. The soda fountain part of the building was moved to one side of the island and made into a cottage.

Up until the time of the law suit, the road around the island went very close to a number of the cottages and crossed the hotel grounds between the hotel and the annex building. As part of the agreement between the cottagers and Mr. Hanes, the road around the island was moved outside the hotel grounds and toward the center of the island, thus giving more space between the cottages and the road.

The hotel was operated as a vacation place for families and Mr. Hanes never sold liquor or beer.

After his death, his wife sold out and since then a number of different people have owned the hotel. One of the owners changed the hotel's name to the Paradise Hotel as it is now known. The present owners of the hotel are Mr. and Mrs. Hart, formerly of Ft. Wayne.

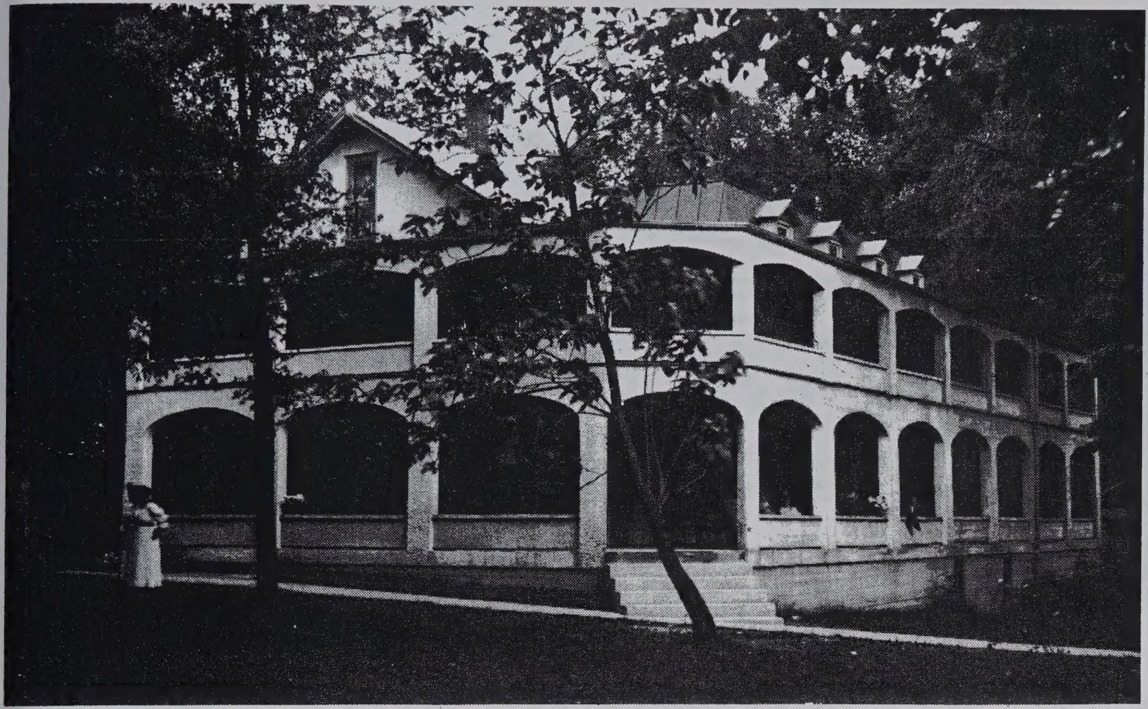
Fountain Park

Fountain Park, located at the head of the lake on the east side, was inherited by Mabel Day and her brother, Mark Rinehart at the death of their grandfather, Horace N. Van Auken, Sr., in 1913. Mabel's husband, Roger Day, bought Mark's share, and in 1945 platted the lake frontage to off-lots, believing it would yield fountains for the owners. He wanted it to be called "Fountain Park."

The present site of Clark's Landing was once part of the Rube Dally farm. The farm, which extended from Coldwater Road to the lake, was inherited by Rant Dally

who sold a part to Charlie Hanes. Hanes moved a house to the shore and lived there eight years until he bought a hotel at the south end of the lake and there sold the land to Glenn Clark. Clark, his wife, Mabel, and their son, Floyd, developed this area into a resort for fisherman and their families with cabins, store, boats and bait.

Black-Creek Flats was laid out to lots by James Cox in 1938. The creek land, a natural habitat for many wild flowers and birds, is dotted with small cottages.



Cold Springs Hotel, early 1900's.

Cold Springs

Cold Springs resort, on the east side of Hamilton Lake, has been in the Watkins family for four generations. It has a mile and a half of shore-line, extending from the mouth of Black Creek on the north to Road One at the southern end. Its name comes from the natural springs found there.

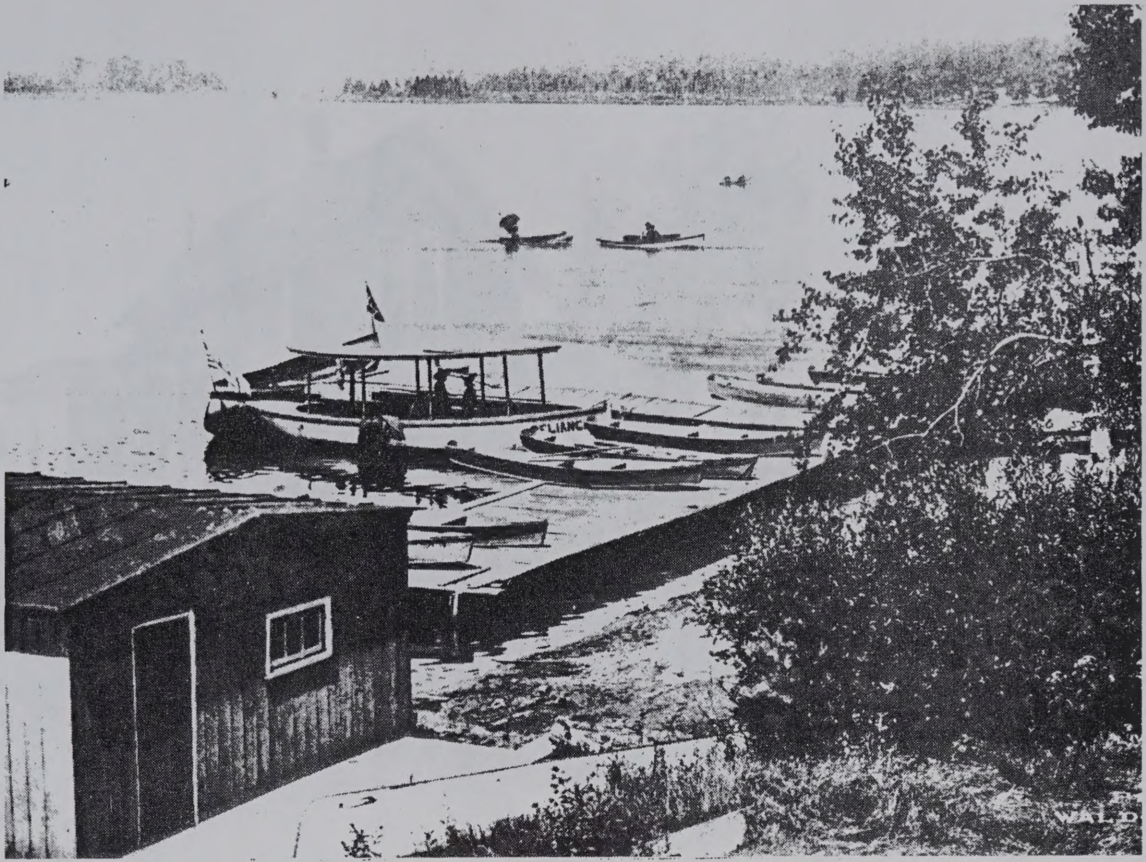
The land was entered by Sydney Gambia and bought from Jerry Kepler by Simpson Watkins in 1870. In 1881 it was bought by his son, Homer Watkins, who with his wife Emily (Haughey) Watkins, became interested in a recreational resort. Plotted to lake lots in 1895, it became known as the "Cold Springs Resort." It is the oldest development on the lake, and the first cottage was built in 1885. Watkins used a leasing arrangement for the resort.

The original hotel, of a few rooms, was built in 1897. Remodeling and the addition of 25 rooms was done in 1913. When Homer Watkins died in 1950 (he was 95) his grandsons, Lyle and Robert Watkins, became trustees of his estate. In 1969 they remodeled the hotel, modernizing the rooms and dining area.

The first dance at Cold Springs is said to have been a square dance given in 1881. The big dance hall was built in 1904. Before World War I, band concerts, public speakers, baseball, bowling, sliding and bathing entertained the crowds. Providing music for dancing were: Erman Shank on piano, Spiel Weiss on drums and Doc Lermanine on violin. In 1916 Rosco Watkins enlarged the old pavillion and in 1923 built a new dance hall to meet the demands of crowds for the modern dance orchestras.

Not only have many popular orchestras appeared at Cold Springs, but record hops were also held. They were started at Cold Springs, along with WOWO publicity, in 1954, continuing with appearances by popular recording stars until 1975. The big bands continue to be a summer attraction at Cold Springs Resort.

Many outdoor sports continue to be enjoyed at the resort. Among them: swimming, boating, skiing and golf. The Spring Hills Golf Course was built in 1956 as a nine hole par three course. An additional nine holes was added in 1962. In 1981 the course was designed to accomodate a few longer holes, and is now described as an executive course with pro shop facilities.



Cold Springs boat docks, early 1900's.

The Coffee Shop on the grounds was built in 1938 to replace an open concession stand.

The present beach site replaced the old bathing beach at Willow Point and the picnic area was created in 1947.

Some highlights in Cold Springs memories include the pleasure boat "Mildred," which carried visitors from uptown to Cold springs from 1905 through 1910. On any given Sunday, there could be as many as 10,000 people on Cold Springs' lawn. One Sunday the dock collapsed into the lake, taking with it a capacity crowd waiting for a boat ride. In 1900 William Jennings Bryant campaigned from the porch of the hotel. Also in the early 1900's league baseball was played every Sunday at the ball park. The teams came from Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. The ball park was located where golf greens are now.

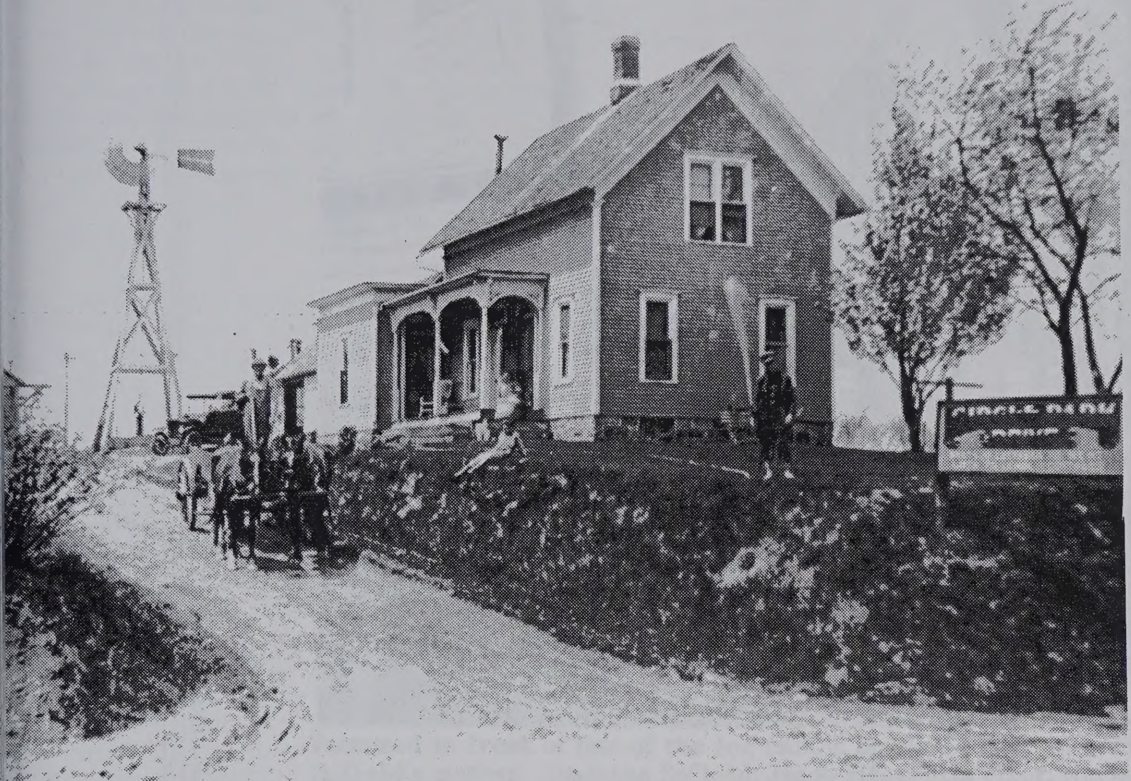
Circle Park

by Hugh Enfield

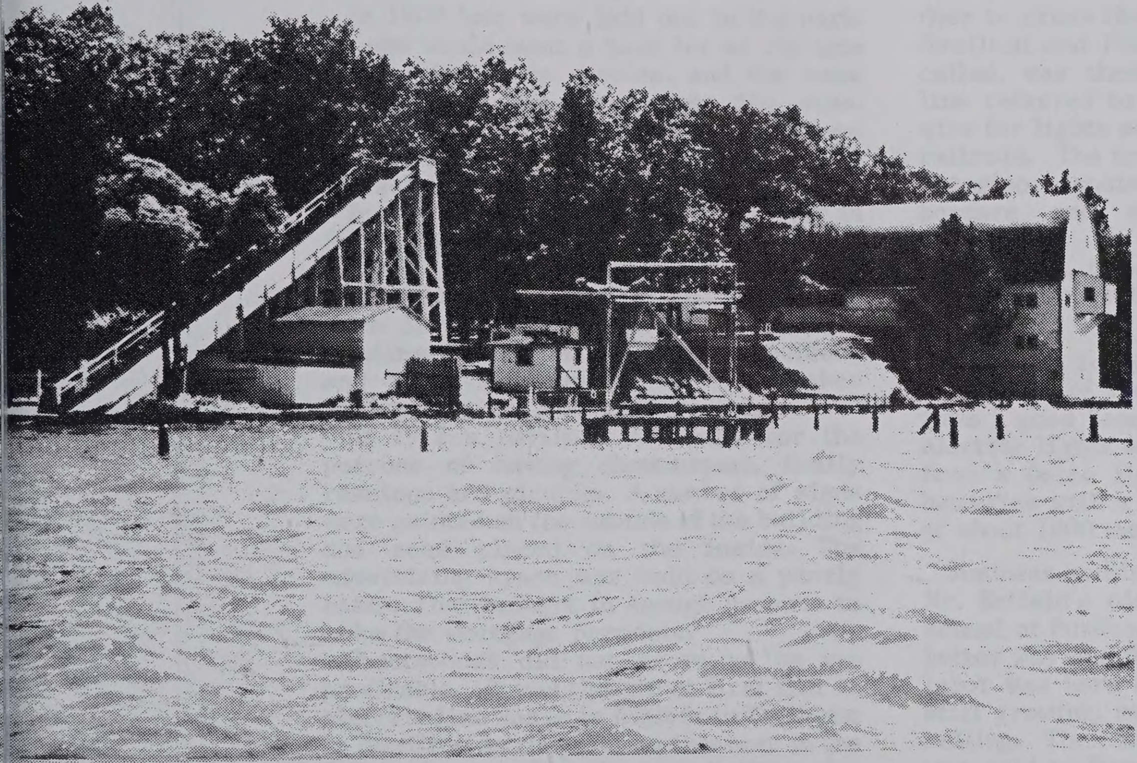
In 1903 Fred Enfield of Alvarado, Indiana, had a merry-go-round and a motion picture and slide projector with which he traveled southern states. When in Monteagle, Tennessee he observed a park area where businessmen of the surrounding cities and towns would bring their families for the summer months to enjoy the cool mountain air, Chautauquas and some sports. It was here that he got the idea that a similar park would be good at a lake in Indiana.

A place on the lake was found, and in 1906 Mr. Enfield purchased a farm of 75 acres, more or less, for the sum of $4000. There was a wooded area by the lake with a small field adjoining, the remainder being on the main road between Hamilton and Otsego Center. A small strip of land was purchased from Charles Oberlin for a road along the lake into the park area.

In 1908 Hugh Campbell, a brother to Mrs. Enfield, came to work on the farm while Mr. Enfield built a cottage by the lake near the farm house. Roads were built in the park and trees were cut for lumber. The cottage was rented to people vacationing and guests of the family. By 1916 it became troublesome to take care of, along with the park, so the upper part was moved to the farm house to be a garage and storage.


CIRCLE PARK

The entrance to Circle Park and Enfield family home in 1918.



Circle Park amusement center.

Pictured in front of one of the log cabins at Circle Park in 1919 are, (left to right): Mr. Enfield's mother, Samantha Enfield; Jacob Fifer; Ella Fifer, Mr. Enfield's aunt; Mr. Enfield's cousin; Clara Enfield and Fred Enfield. Seated on ground are Hugh and George Enfield.

In 1909 lots were laid out in the park. No one would want a back lot so the lots were laid out in circles, and the name Circle Park was then given the area. After the first year the lots were removed from the map as the taxation was so much on each lot and that made it another story.

In 1910 the first log cabin was moved in from a farm near Otsego Center.

In 1911 another log cabin was purchased. It was of better quality and some were much larger logs which were taken to Hamilton and planed to a smooth surface and equal thickness. They were then returned to the park and erected.

In 1912 a pavilion was built for the purpose of having chautauquas, family reunions and picnics. A number of signs were painted on the outside of the building and some placed on the inside. The advertising space was sold on a yearly basis. That brought in enough revenue to make the mortgage payments.

Chautauquas did not prove to be too profitable. It was thought at first that an electric line was to be built from Ft. Wayne to Hamilton as they had an interest in the Oakwood area. The line was built as far as Waterloo, but the railroad did not want them to cross their tracks so the line to Hamilton and Fish Lake, as it was then called, was then dropped. The electric line referred to here was not a line of wire for lights and power, but an electric railroad. The trains that came as far as Waterloo consisted of two or three boxcars and a coach or two for passengers.

After this, roller skating was put in and proved very profitable between 1915 and 1924.

In 1921 a toboggan slide was built and many loads of sand were put in the lake to form a good beach area. This same year electric lights were put in and the power from a Delco light system of 32 volts, batteries with a generator, and an output of about 1000 watts.

Business continued to grow, then in 1923 Mr. Enfield's older son, George, started school at Purdue, thinking there must be a better way to make a living. Knowing that labor was hard to find and business was still growing, much thought was given to selling. Then in 1925 the farm and park was sold to Homer and Irene Waterhouse for the sum of $29,000.

In 1925, Homer and Dale Waterhouse ought Enfield's property and constructed n amusement center. The skating rink as modernized and a large reunion hall nd storage space were included. Outside urners and free tables were placed for cnickers. Concession stands were built nd a modern restaurant called Circle Inn was added. The beach and toboggan slide were upgraded and a kiddie playground was added along with more fishing boats, etc.

In 1970, Tom and Mary Poynter bought Circle Park resort. They continued the business until 1980 when they sold all but their house for a housing development.

Oakwood Park

The resort area known as Oakwood Park ad Oakwood Shores was first obtained fom the U.S. General Land Office by Ncanor Munson of Cattaraugus County, New Yrk, on August 1, 1837. President Martin VnBuren signed these papers.

The land passed through the estates of sveral well known families, such as, Fee, Kpler, Sewell, Husselman, and Cameron util 1881, when it was bought by Hiram Seet. On June 24, 1912 he sold a strip of lad 40 feet wide (known as Shoestring Dive), beginning at the present State Rad One, north of Hamilton, and following th meandering shoreline of the lake, to th DeKalb Mortgage and Loan Company of Aburn, Indiana. Also sold was a tract of lad at the northerly end which was pltted and recorded as Oakwood Place, a vilage. Along the thickly wooded lake frnt many summer homes were cstructed.

n June 3, 1922, Girt L. Gnagy purchased Shestring Drive and the unsold lands of Oawood Place from the DeKalb Mortgage a Loan Company. He developed the shoreline and improved the road. He also constructed approximately a thousand feet of concrete sea wall in front of which was one of the largest natural sandy bathing beaches on Hamilton Lake.

On June 4, 1945, the county constructed a new public highway from the intersection of State Road One, extending northerly, connecting with an established street in Oakwood Place that connected to the resort area of Circle Park.

On February 2, 1953, Lyle E. Gnagy purchased from Glenn O. Sweet, a tract of land between the new road and Shoestring Drive, and together with Girt Gnagy estate heirs, combined lands to form Oakwood Shores.

Around 1920, Girt Gnagy subdivided a wooded part of his farm, which fronted on Hamilton Lake, under the name of Lily Dale Subdivision.

Just west of Hamilton the Girt Gnagy Athletic Field was developed by the Hamilton Booster Club. The land for this project was leased by Lyle, Max and Lynn Gnagy, sons of Girt Gnagy.

Penn Park and Other Developments

dgewater Beach is a lake frontage on th west side of the lake that has lots laid ou by Charles Hanes.

ghland Park development was promoted y George Illges of Madison, Wisconsin. It s on the west side of the lake. In the 90's six hundred lots were purchased by ol Kepler for farm land.

ussell's Point was plotted and promoted y he James Russell family. A mile and a al of shoreline on the west side of the ak is called Forest Park.

Enn Park is a peninsula that projects ut into the lake from the west.

Te first survey made of Otsego ownship, including Penn Park, was made ay 1831, by George W. Harrison. This at of land was first purchased from the ied States by John Stealy in March, 33, under the presidency of Martin Van urn, and contained forty-nine acres.

Dferent portions of this tract were ol and the small portion known as the peninsula (13.41 acres) was bought by George Farnum June 16, 1892, from Calvin and Alta Fee.

Charles Kepler and George Farnum had the first cottages built. Supplies were moved to these cottages by boat. An old corduroy road led through the swamp and into the peninsula.

In November 1893, Mr. Farnum also purchased land for a road from Calvin and Alta Fee.

July 8, 1916, Ella Farnum Omstead (wife and sole heir of George Farnum), and Albert H. Omstead sold the land to James S. Peddicord.

On July 10, 1916, the peninsula was made into plots to be known as Penn Park. An association was formed with a constitution and by-laws and lots were numbered from one to eighty-nine.

Mr. Peddicord built cottages number thirty-nine and forty. They were known as Dan Lias Cottages. Mr. Peddicord lived

in one cottage while building the road and improving the park.

After Ella Farnum Omstead's death in 1920, Frank Kepler bought cottage number eight and then number forty-seven and started a boat livery. Later he bought two more lots to accommodate more boats. He also built a cottage on lots forty-four and forty-five. He ran the boat livery until 1942.

The rest of the lots were sold to individuals. The road has been improved and is maintained by the county. The constitution prohibits business enterprises, making it a residential area.

Undeveloped Lake Land

The only part of the lake which remained undeveloped into modern days was the head, which was owned by Roger Day of Edgerton. From the top of the hill at the head, one has a commanding view of two-thirds of the lake's area of 765 acres.

Indian lore has it the spot at the head was once Indian ceremonial grounds. In the literature of the state maps show an Indian village one mile north and a little east of Hamilton Lake on the southwest quarter of section 15, township 36, 14 east. These maps show six trails leading out from the village, marking it as an important settlement.

Ball's Lake

Ball's Lake is one and one-half miles southwest of Hamilton in section 32. The land on the west side of the lake was first owned by S. Relah Funk of Madison County, New York. It was entered at the United States Land Office, Fort Wayne on May 16, 1836.

The oblong lake covers seventy-eight acres. It has a marl bottom. Many stories have been told about the great depth of this lake. One of interest concerns George Baxter. He dove off a boat with a large rock in his hand. He said he went so deep and the water was so cold that he thought he could not let go of the rock. He could not reach the bottom.

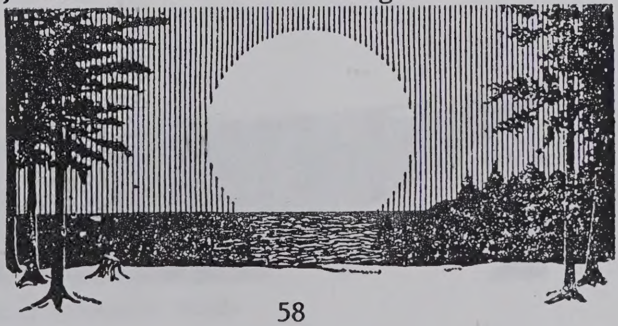
There was only one very small beach on the northeast side of the lake. The rest of the shoreline had a very sharp drop off a few feet from shore. This sudden drop off is due to a drainage project, the Hiram Sweet Ditch, which was dug to drain a large area of swamp land east of Ball's Lake. The project lowered the lake about four feet.

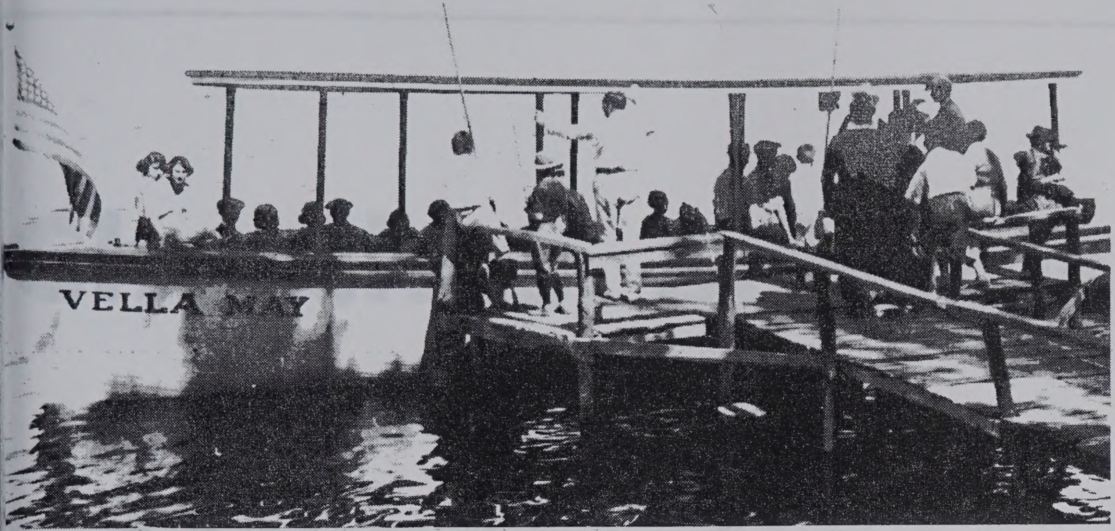
In 1954 there was only one cottage on the lake. The shoreline still has not been improved. In June of that year, however, the state purchased a right-of-way from Avery Lemmon, Sr., and a road was eventually constructed from the main road to the lake.

Mrs. Buck told the story of how thousands of buffalo came to the lake for water. When they came down the steep banks on the northwest side of the lake they wore great paths in the bank. Because they never return by the same path, many paths were made. These buffalo paths are still visible.

The lake lies near the Old Defiance Trail and there was spring water nearby. Mrs. John Fee, who homesteaded in the area, said it was a common sight to see camp fires of homesteaders and covered wagons clustered thickly around the shores of the lake at night.

Mrs. Fee also related that the lake was a favorite hunting place for the Indians who came down from the general direction of what is now Walnut Street. Also, there was an Indian cemetery west of her home and she often saw their ceremonial dances. To them the spirits of the dead were very real. They would build big bonfires and dance around them, throwing the choice meat of the buffalo and the pigeon into the fires, showing the spirits they were not forgotten.



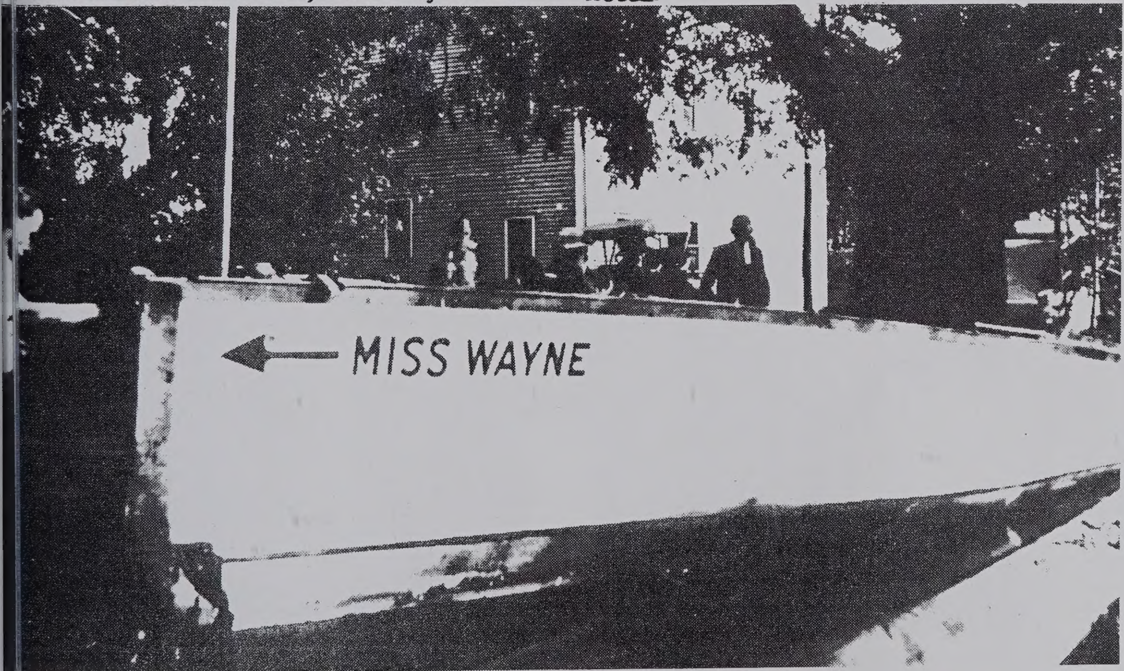


asure boat "Vella Mae" built and run by C.B. Dirrim transported tourists to Island Park tel and other points of interest on the lake in the teens.

Pleasure Boats

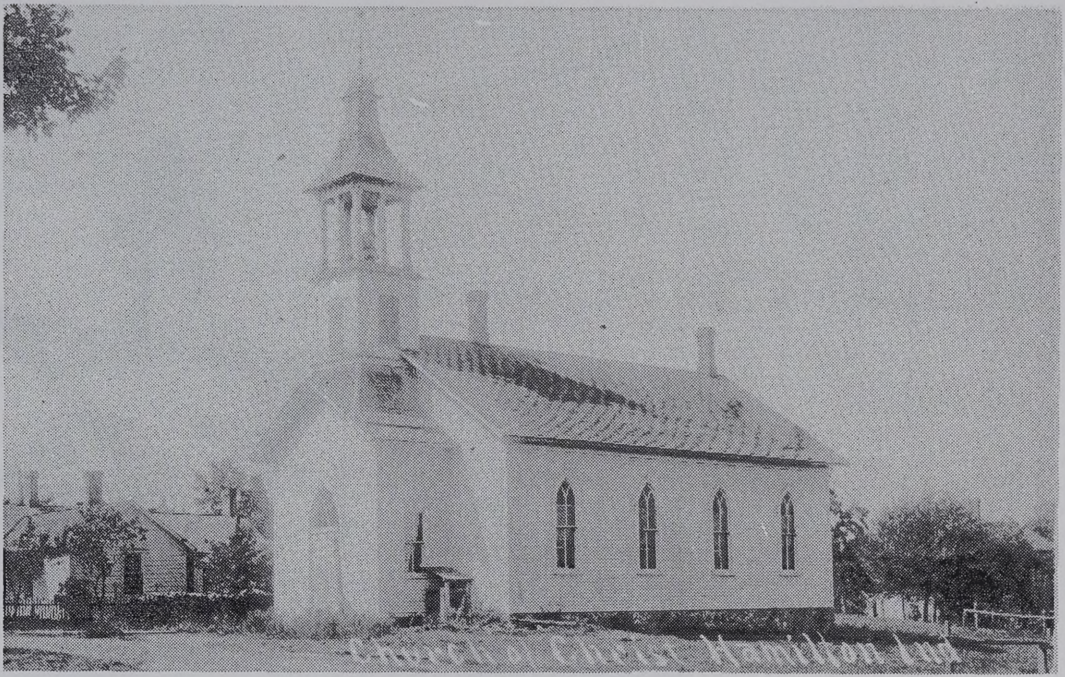
s Hamilton gained a reputation as a ort area, pleasure boats became part of scene. In 1890, Max and William lton built a large flat bottom amboat, twenty-four feet wide by enty feet long, propelled by two paddle eels, one on each side. There was a r piece band on board to furnish music square dancing. Six sets could dance the music of Matthew, Dode, Max and er Houlton. The boat was called "City Hamilton" and was on the lake for two rs.

he steamboat "Mildred," built by Glenn White and Stanley Bentley, was put on the lake for pleasure and transportation in the nineties through the early nineteen hundreds at a time when the Wabash Railroad ran excursions to Hamilton and Cold Springs was the only resort on the lake. Later, the "Reliance" and "Illene," gasoline passenger launches, were introduced by Roscoe Watkins. They ran until 1913. Then C. B. Dirrim built the "Vella Mae," a large passenger and pleasure launch that was on the lake for many years. At the last it served as a recreational feature for the Island Park Hotel.



"Miss Wayne", an early pleasure boat.

Churches, Schools and Organizations



Hamilton Church of Christ, early 1900's.

Hamilton Church of Christ

The following history of the Hamilton Church of Christ was compiled by June Preston, present secretary of the church:

Before June, 1885, several persons in the locality of Hamilton had been attending Christian Church services at Metz, Indiana, and in the Coll School House in Troy Township in DeKalb County, Indiana. These people felt a need for a Church of Christ in the town of Hamilton.

Through the efforts of Luman and Jane Beard, permission was granted to hold an organizational meeting in the Hamilton Methodist Church (which was then on the hill by the cemetery, on West Church Street). The first meeting was held on the evening of June 5, 1885. Eleven members were baptized. Plans were made to purchase land and build a church as soon as possible.

Under the leadership of Elder J. T. Stewart the first church officials were selected. They were: Talma Rummel and Charles Segur; Deacons: Luman Beard and Thomas Hagerty; clerk: L. N. Aldrich; Treasurer: Thomas Hagerty; Trustees:

Hamilton Christian Sunday School

Early 1900's Church of Christ Sunday School poses on church steps.

Hamilton Church of Christ, today.

mes Lewis, Charles Segur, Ben Bell, alma Rummel and Luman Beard.

Services were held on June 20, 1885 with enty-two members present.

Property was purchased from John M. and ncy J. Sewell with the deed dated June 28, 85 which included lots 11 and 12 in Block (now known as 108 and 110 East Church reet). There was also a parcel of land tending from lot 121 east to the creek. e parcel of land was later sold and mes built.

On July 4, 1885 the ladies of the church d a lunch stand at the town's festivity d the proceeds were used toward the ilding of the new church facilities.

Under the supervision of Professor arles Segur work commenced on the new urch building within two months. Work ved rapidly in late 1885. The first dication services were held the third Sunday in January, 1886.

The building was repaired and enlarged in 1909 and re-dedicated on October 3, 1909. Both of the dedication sermons were preached by L. L. Carpenter of Wabash, Indiana.

The last charter member of the church was Minnie (Beard) Hagerty, wife of Cassious Hagerty. She passed away in 1954.

In 1953 a parsonage for the minister was built on lot 11, now known as 108 East Church Street.

In 1960 an educational wing was added to the church building. This wing has four classrooms, minister's office, Sunday School superintendent's office and two restrooms.

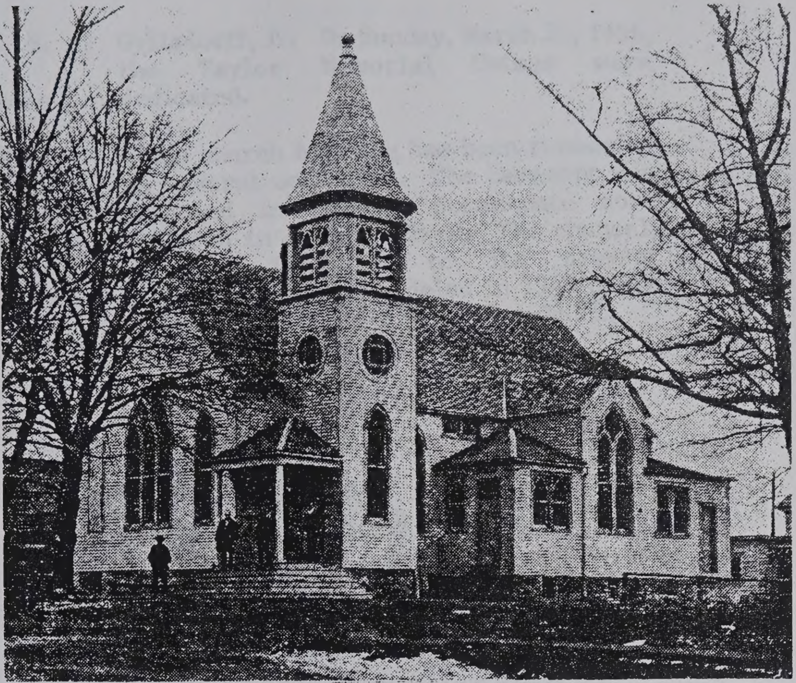
A new baptistry was built in 1967 and the parsonage was enlarged at that same time making it to its present size.

The Methodist Church

The following information on the history the Hamilton United Methodist Church s provided to us by Leo Radcliff.

lethodists were scarce among the first neers. In those early days all nominations worked together to ablish Christian groups in the woods, ping in this way to sustain the neers' faith during trying days of ablishing new homes in the wilderness. he first Methodist circuit in this section of Indiana was formed in 1838 as the LaGrange Circuit. It included Steuben County and LaGrange County in Indiana and the southern half of Branch County, Michigan. The first presiding elder was Richard Hargrave and the first ministers were G. M. Boyd and Mr. Jenkins.

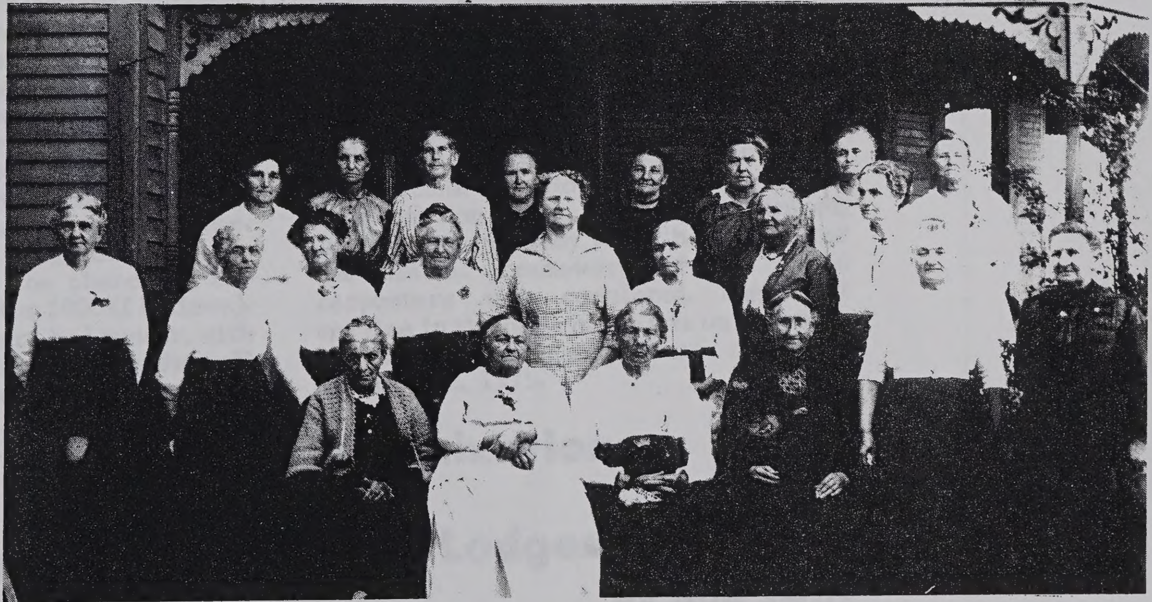
Three years later Goshen District was formed and Steuben Circuit organized. In 1850 this circuit was divided into the Orland and Angola circuits to accomodate



Hamilton United Methodist Church in early 1900's.

new "classes", such as Hamilton and Alvarado, that were springing up. The Fort Wayne District was not created until 1871 and a year later the Hamilton Circuit was formed consisting of Hamilton, Otsego, North Otsego and Alvarado churches. In 1852 the first Methodist Church was built on land donated by John Fee on the south side of West church Street. The first Methodist parsonage was located on the west side of the parcel of land where the old school gym is.

On January 6, 1900 the present Methodist Church on Wayne Street was dedicated. The pastor was Rev. A. L. Weaver. The cost of the building was over $4200. Some of the people who contributed to the new building were Nathaniel Baker, Arthur Sanxter, Robert Dirrim, William Dirrim, William Keyes, Robert Renner, William Chard, Hiram Sweet, Alec Hammond, M. J.

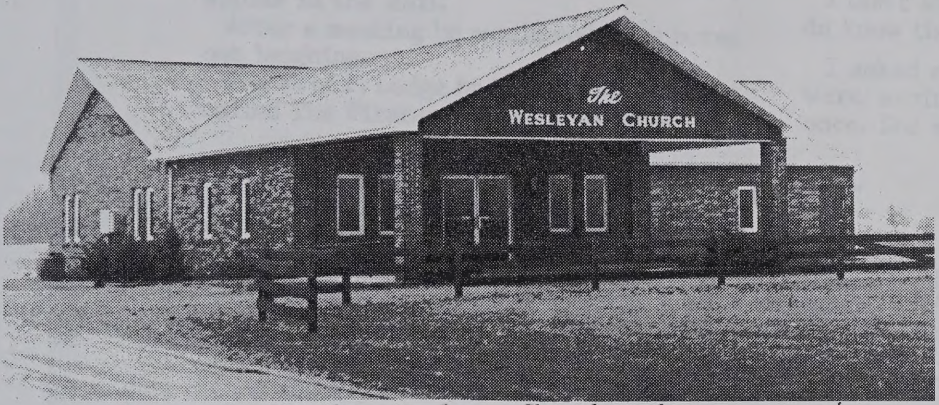


United Methodist Women's Sunday School class between 1908 and 1919 included, (left to right), front row: Phoebe Thomas, Bettie Griffith, Hattie Slentz, and Olive Aldrich. Second row: Emma Slentz, Mollie Sanxter, Amanda Sewell, Lucricia Gurtner, Elma Baker (teacher), Inez Sewell, Agnes Griffin, Mary Cameron, Fannie Good and Kalie Luton. Back row: Elizabeth Taylor, Helen Hall, Margaret Merchant, Zelda Fee, Ella Fifer, Martha Sewell, Julia Griffith and Mrs. Adam Richey.

Waterman, B. F. Griffith and E. E. Lautzenhiser.

The church began to develop a more effective ministry through music in 1942. Under the direction of Rev. Paul Stephenson the choir was reorganized. After soliciting for funds the church was able to purchase and install a Hammond electronic instrument. The "organ" was dedicated in December of 1947. The organist at that time was Mrs. T. A. Gyllsdorff, Jr. On Sunday, March 25, 1956, the Taylor Memorial Chimes were dedicated.

The church building has been remodeled on several occasions. The basement was enlarged in 1945 to accomodate more children in church school. The chancel, enlarged in 1810 to its present dimensions, was remodeled in 1949 under the guidance of Rev. William Meddock.



Hamilton Wesleyan Church, today.

The Wesleyan Church

by Martha Williamson

Mrs. Elmer (Mary) Wideman, a local resident who was unable to travel to a near-by town for a place of worship, prayed that a fundamental church(of her choice) would be opened in the town of Hamilton. Rev George Ott, a former pastor of the Williamson family, inquired if there were any churches in this area for sale because the conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church desired to open a church in the northeast part of the state. After inquiries and negotiations, the conference purchased the church on the hill (by the cemetery) for $900 (I believe).

This church was in very bad repair, with a bird's nest built in the clock on the wall and wall paper hanging loose from the ceiling. With much hard work Rev. Ott and Rev. Joe Leach had it in good condition again, ready for dedication the spring of 1953.

The first Sunday there were 13 present: Rev. and Mrs. Manlove and daughter; two Widemans; four Williamsons and four Shindledeckers.

The new church was built during the pastorate of Rev. Horn by the consecrated labor of Ron Smith, James Schwartzkopf, Jim Ankney and many other helpers, after the initial framework of the hired carpenters was completed. The first service in the new church was on November 10, 1974. The church was dedicated November 2, 1975.

Early Clubs and Organizations

Recollections of the Lodges

by Bob Swift

Lodges were popular and had large memberships. Every year they had an annual supper. Dad belonged to all three lodges.

As was the custom at that time, men ate first and the women served tables. Kids had to sit on chairs and be quiet. There were always some big eaters who kept eating long after most of the men were through. It was murder to sit there starving while those men ate.

The K of P Lodge had an annual rabbit

Just For Fun

by Bob Swift

Businessmen and lake men used to meet once a year. They called themselves The H. A. Club. I asked dad the meaning of H. A. and he said Hamilton Angels.

They would have a parade followed by a closed meeting.

I always questioned his explanation of H. A.

The initiates wore horse collars in the parade and he once received a box of horse apples in the mail.

After a meeting he would suddenly burst out laughing.

The K. of P. Lodge had a fun organization called The Pirates. I don't know what they did but when the windows were up in the lodge hall, we could hear men laughing for long distance. They always talked about a shipwreck.

Mother belonged to two clubs, The Advance Club and The Priscilla Club. The women played bunco with dice and the hostess awarded the winners first prize and booby prize.

I don't know anything about bunco, but I do know they made a lot of noise.

I asked mother how they knew what they were saying with all of them talking at once. She said it was a gift of women.

Saturday Night

by Bob Swift

When I was young, Saturday night was farmers night in Hamilton and they came to town in droves. Automobiles were new and expensive, so there were not many around. Farmers drove horses and used buggies and wagons in summer, sleighs and bobsleds in winter. There were hitching racks at all the churches, by the hardware, at both livery stables and at the mill. These would be full.

Town people did their shopping earlier in the week but came to the business block to visit relatives and friends.

Grocery stores were busy trading butter and eggs for groceries. Most farmers separated their milk and sold the cream so the cream station was busy. Barber shops were swamped. The hardware store was busy for farmers did not have the time to shop any other time. The dry goods store sold all types of clothing and shoes. Overalls were 79 cents, work shirts 39 cents and work socks 10 cents. Women made most of their clothing so the yard goods department was busy. Women were so sensitive they would buy intimate apparel only from a lady clerk. In summer, the drug store had a long line waiting at the soda fountain. Wolf's did a big business selling bulk garden seeds. They also sold feed. One big item was white glass eggs. The women thought they inspired hens to lay in an empty nest. Dad did half of his business on Saturday night.

Businessmen started to sponsor free movies. The movies were first shown west of Brown's Barber Shop but soon moved to a lot on the west side of the main street. Posts were set in the ground and planks were fastened to the top for seating. Walter Griffith ran the projector. Movies were silent so words said by the actors were printed on the screen. Mothers would read the words to their children. Westerns were the most popular.

Our community was like a big family. People knew each other and most were good friends. They would visit in the stores and on the street and it was great time for everyone. If someone was ill there was always plenty of help. If a farmer lost a barn the neighbors helped build a new one. If a farmer was ill, injured at planting or harvest time, both town and country people would do his work even if it meant a setback for them. Mechanized equipment ws a long time in the future, so it took long hours to do the work.

People enjoyed their fellowship and friendship back then. It is a shame some of today's people have not experienced it.

supper in November. It was the only time during hunting season that dad went hunting. Rabbits were plentiful and dad was a crack shot so he got a lot of them. I was taught at an early age to clean rabbits, chickens and fish so I had to clean the rabbits dad had shot. Mother was an expert at cooking rabbits so she was kept busy.

All of the suppers were potluck so there was a big variety of food.

The Masons had an annual oyster supper. They had other food but oysters were the main dish.

The IOOF Lodge had an annual sugar stir in March. Following supper they gave us boys pails to get clean snow. Maple syrup was poured on the snow and stirred until it was creamy, so we had maple ice cream.

Knights of Pythias Pythian Sisters and Past Chiefs

by Elta Mortorff

The Hamilton Lodge No. 228 was instituted and established as a subordinate lodge of the Order of Knights of Pythias on August 19, 1889.

Charter Members were: John Somerlott, John Hammond, Oliver Brown, Edward Hagerty, George Hammond, Tim Dirrim, Joel Worthington, John Hinkle, J. F. Cameron, Thomas French, A. J. Stout, Frank Gilmore, Clyde Sharp, F. M. Dirrim, George Mills, J. E. Garwood, Oliver Learned, Thomas Teegardin, Otis Gilmore, Charles Brown, John Gnagy, William Nichols, Frank Wright, R. E. Sharp, and E. A. Crain.

On June 4, 1890 the charter was duly executed and signed by the State Grand Keepers of Records and Seals, Frank Bowen and U. B. Hunt, Grand Chancellor. In November, 1981 the Waterloo Leonidas Lodge No. 205 consolidated with the Hamilton Pythias Lodge.

The lodge meets on every Monday night of the year.

Hamilton Pythian Sisters was granted its charter on October 5, 1898. They were first named Rathbone Temple No. 51, but in later years renamed Pythian Sisters, No. 51.

Charter members were: Zoe Brown, M.E,C.; Lillie Sharp, E. Senior; Vina Sweet, E. Junior; Jennie Sharp, Manager; Tina Weir, Secretary; Tamor Learned, Treasurer; Mary Gilmore, Protector; Mrs. John Willennar, Guard; Mrs. Jessie Hammond, Past Chief.

The charter was signed by Lola Calvert, Grand Chief and Dr. Isabel Teague, grand Mistress of Correspondence. There are 46 sisters and five brother Knights on the roster. We meet on the second and forth Wednesday nights of the month. We have four 50 year members. They are: Mary Sharp, Elta Morforff, Lydia Gnagy and Helen Carpentar.

The Hamilton Temple No. 51 Past Chiefs Club was instituted in January, 1933. Flossie Schall, District Deputy of District No. 2, started this club. The initiation ceremony was written by Minnie Humphreys Jones of Huntington, Indiana.

The club meets on the first Monday of the month. Only sisters who hold Past Chiefs certificates are allowed in the club and at present we have 13 members on the roster.

The Grange

by Elta Mortorff

The Secretary and Treasurer's records of the Hamilton Grange began on November 11, 1899 with the list of duly elected officers. On January 13, 1900 those officers were installed.

For a short period of time their meetings were held in the town hall, the rental fee being $1.25 per meeting. They moved their meeting place into a room at the K of P Hall and later into rooms in the Malone building. In 1946 the Dutch Gap schoolhouse and land was purchased and still houses the Grange.

Two members of our Grange are family descendants of charter members; Alice Latier, whose uncle R. G. Renner was elected Overseer and installed that January 13, 1900; Lucile Cather, whose great uncle, Allen Hamman, was a charter member. Ezra Lautzenhiser was first Lecturer of Hamilton Grange and a Past Master.

Early ways of meeting financial expenses were by serving Hamilton Lions Club in the newly purchased school building and with fall Harvest Suppers and auctions. We now have the fair booth, flea markets and rentals from reunions.

The Grange meets the first and third Saturday of the month from March until January with potluck suppers.

Schools

Also recorded in Morley's history book is the location of Otsego's first school house. Otsego Center was built on Section 16, and the first teacher was Amos Staneliff. During school months different families took him in. The seats in the early school house were made of split logs and they were placed around the sides of the room. The desks were rough planks and were put on pegs driven in the walls. Goose quill pens and slates and chalk were used in writing lessons. Order was maintained with the infamous switch.

About a mile east of Otsego Center was Haughey's Corners, named after Timothy Haughey, who moved there in 1861. He taught school at the Cowen School, later the Corbin School, east of Haughey's Corners. It was a frame building. Later it was replaced by a brick school house called McCool School.

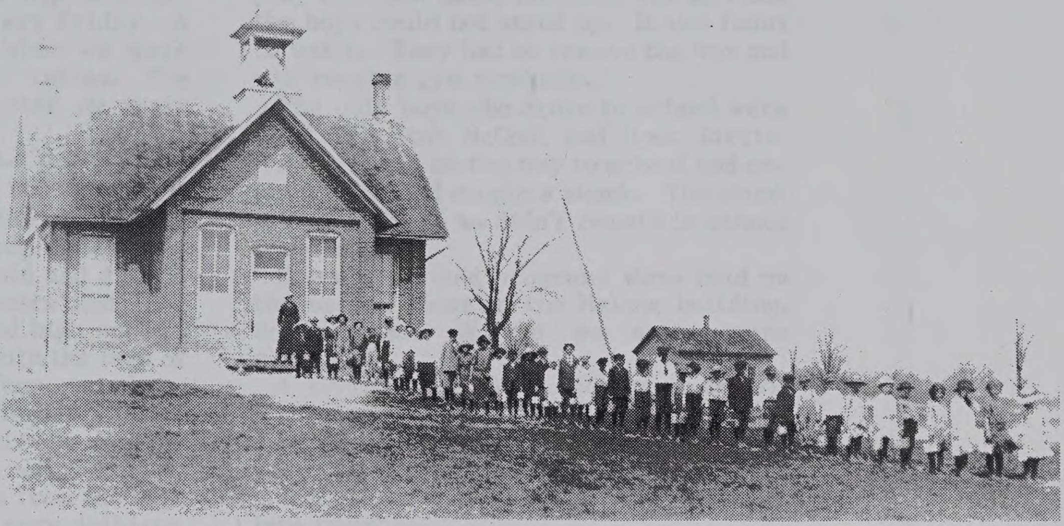


Photo from the twenties shows the first (right) and last (left) Corbin School.

Recollections of School in the 20's

by Bob Swift

There is a big difference between schools of the early twenties and modern schools.

The Hamilton School stood where Suttons store in now located. It was a two story brick building with a belfry. Grades one through six were on the first floor, seventh and eighth grades and high school were on the second floor. A kitchen was in a room in the basement where girls were taught domestic science. Another room in the basement contained a wood working shop where boys were taught manual training.

The township trustee hired the teachers and maintained the buildings. O.G. Simpson was county superintendent and was in charge of academics in all county schools. O.D. Kessler was superintendent of the Hamilton school.

Discipline was very strict. Parents backed teachers 100%. Most fathers told their sons "If you get spanked in school, you will get one twice as hard at home." They never backed down from the rule.

Almost all students walked to school. Snow, sleet, fog or cold never prevented school from opening. Country students that lived close to town attended school in Hamilton. The rest attended country schools where all elementary grades were taught in one room by one teacher.

At the completion of the eighth grade, a written examination required by the state, had to be passed before a student could enter high school.

Commencements were all held in one of the churches. There was always an eighth grade commencement. Each child had to participate. They had the choice of singing a solo, playing a musical instrument or reciting a poem. I had been

aking cornet lessons from Roger Houlton or about a year so I played a solo. I had ever played in public and the church was acked. Boy, was I nervous. I got along retty well the first half of the solo but hen I started to play the second half my ip started to quiver and it sounded errible. After the ceremony Hattie ewell told my dad, "You better buy that oy a new horn. That one sounds awful."

In elementary school there were two rades in a room. This was an advantage or we learned from the higher grade and t was repetition from the lower grade. ountry school students heard more epetition than we did so they were sharp tudents when they entered high school.

A spelldown was held every Friday. A imilar contest was held when we were earning multiplication tables. The inners received a gold star on their rade cards.

All plumbing was outdoors. If we wanted drink of water, we pumped the water into collapsible cup we kept in our desk.

Almost everyone wore long underwear. omes and schools were cold and drafty. oys usually wore knee pants and long tockings until they entered high school. irls were always fussing with the legs of heir long underwear. They tried to mooth the bumps so their legs would not ook lumpy. Boys didn't give a darn if heir legs looked lumpy or not.

It was hammered into boys from the time hey were small that girls were delicate. oys always had to sit next to the drafty indows because they were tough.

Sports consisted of high school aseball and basketball. Baseball was played on a diamond southeast of Circle Park. Left field was downhill so it was a tricky position to play. Basketball was played in Wright's gymnasium. Harry Wright converted a livery stables into a gym. The floor was not full size and the ceiling was low so a shot at the basket could not be arched. He heated the gym with a one register furnace. The large register was placed in the center of the playing floor. We were thrilled when the new gym was completed in the new high school in 1928. Before a game was played in the new gym, they put a coat of Johnson's paste wax on the playing floor and buffed it to a high polish. When they tried to play the first game, the floor was so slick the boys could not stand up. It was funny to watch. They had to remove the wax and use regular gym products.

The only boys who drove to school were Ross and Stub McCool and Hook Dirrim. Hook trapped on the way to school and one morning he had caught a skunk. The skunk sprayed him so he didn't remain in school very long.

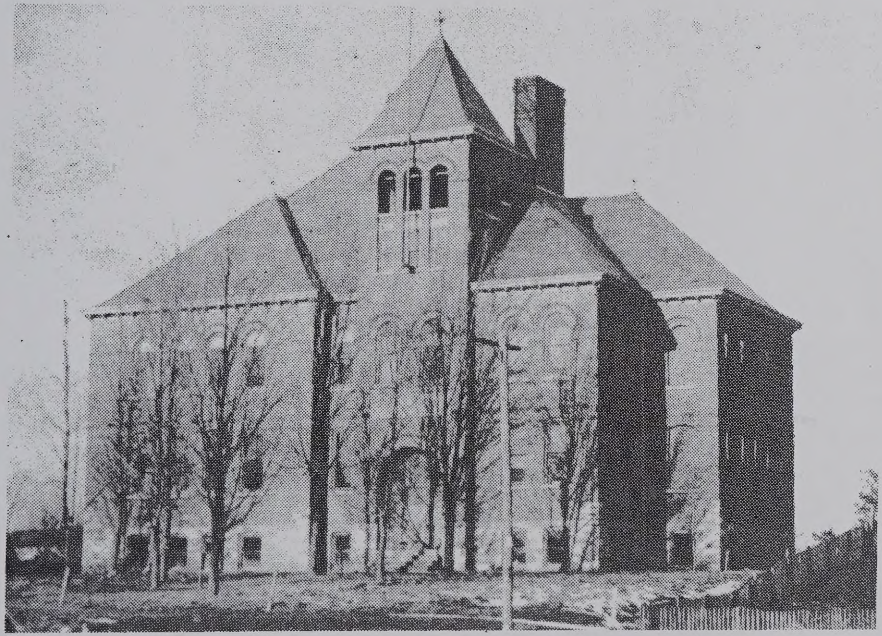
Class plays and programs were held on the second floor of the Malone building. Seating was limited so seats were reserved.

A contest was held each year in the Christian Church in Angola. Singing and instrumental solos, orchestras and readings were on the program.

School buses were not in use until the late twenties.

If a child failed a grade he was required to take it over.

Basic education was thorough. I never had any trouble when I went to college.



Hamilton town school as it was in the 1920's.

Legends and Recollections

"The Legend of the White Pilgrim"

by Paul Van Gundy

The following article was submitted by the late Paul Van Gundy of Bryan, Ohio. He discovered it in the April 10, 1902 edition of the Bryan Democrat while researching the history of the Bellefountain Road.

The other day on the train a friend of mine, knowing that I had a fondness for local history, asked me what I knew, could remember, or had ever heard about the White Pilgrim. The inquiry, and what he said upon the subject, at once caused me to fall into a reminiscent mood. As a result of such information as I could gain, and drawing upon my own recollection of things long past, I am able to reproduce the following as the legend of the White Pilgrim.

"Once upon a time long ago, there lived two brothers by the name of Thomas in one of the Carolinas. Joseph, the elder brother, was devotedly pious. He became inspired with a missionary spirit and the burning desire to carry the gospel to his fellow men. Obedient to this high calling, he left his home, and journeyed northward, preaching and teaching as he went. He held forth by the wayside, in the groves, in school-houses, in private houses, in churches, in fact, wherever he could gain an audience.

"In his wanderings from the Southland to the North, he is said to have finally reached the Village of Hamilton, Indiana.

"At that time it was a mere hamlet on the shores of the lake. The dwellers in hand about the Village were largely the red men of the forest. The original name of this town was Enterprise. I well remember when it went by that name. The events of which I write were long prior to any definite name for the little village.

"Here Joseph tarried for a time preaching the Gospel to those who would give him audience. Finally disease seized upon him, and after a long period of illness, he died and was buried in a lone cemetery now upon the banks of the lake. I am not able to give the time with definiteness, but such information as I have, leads me to think that this must have been more than three-forths of a century ago.

"The continued absence of Joseph from home and family led the other brother to take up the search for him. The wanderings of the other of the itinerant brothers were easily traced from his home in the Carolinas to his grave in the forest. It is said that the brother finally located the burial place of Joseph. One autumn afternoon he came to the place where the White Pilgrim lay. It is said that he was deeply impressed with the surroundings and the scene and took from his pocket a paper and there wrote a poem. It is a poem of three or four stanzas, but one of which I can now recall, which is as follows:

'I came to the spot where the White Pilgrim lay,
And pensively stood by his tomb,
When, in a low whisper, a voice seemed to say,
How sweetly I sleep here alone.'

"The poem, as I indistinctly remember it,

goes on to recite further sentiments as if expressed by the lone sleeper in the forest. This poem had quite a circulation in the early times, which was even more than local.

"In 1852 a music book was published in Columbus, Ohio, by Alexander Auld. The name of that book was the Ohio Harmonist. It was the first music book with notes introduced in the neighborhood where I was born. This was done by Aaron Pratterson, a young man who lived with his brother in the woods of Edon, Ohio.

"The music of that book is written in the old fashioned 'patent' or 'buck-wheat' notes. The music was written in three parts; treble, tenor and bass. I know of but one copy of that book. The other day I found it at the old homestead, turned the old leaves, and on page 158 I found this poetry set to music. I sang the old song, if singing it might be called. I noticed then that which marks the good musician that the writer of a half century had caught and embalmed in his music the spirit of the poet.

"In that little cemetery on the banks of Lake Hamilton are many, many unmarked graves, I am told. Some are graves of Indians and others mark the resting places of the unknown."

"The Thorn"

In our search for bits of early history of Hamilton, Gertrude Crain, great granddaughter of John Fee, provided us with some information about the early Hamilton settlers. The following story has been passed through the generations to her and appeared in the Steuben Republican on Oct. 16, 1974.

When John Fee first settled in Otsego Township in 1835, the present Bellefountaine Road was the trail traveled by the Potawatomi Indians on their way to the Trading Post at Fort Defiance. Mr. Fee's farm was frequently used as a stopping place by these Indians.

In severe winter weather it was quite common for a few of these people to come to Mr. Fee to ask for a warm place to spend the night. Since this request was usually granted, (the woodshed was usually available), members of the tribe thought of Mr. Fee as a true friend.

Under a large tree across the road from Mr. Fee's home was a favorite spot for various Indian dances. One evening during one of the dances, a young Indian squaw came to the door crying and asking for help. She promised to stay under the kitchen table if she were allowed to come in.

Since it was quite obvious that she was in severe pain, she was allowed to come into the house. The next morning Mr. Fee removed a thorn from the squaw's infected foot. Had she not come asking for help, the Indian Chief would have had her killed because she was not dancing.

This tree still stands on the hill where these Indian dances were held. What stories it could tell if only it could talk!

"The Unsolved Murder"

The following is a recollection of the ate Mrs. J. W. Learned written on May 3, 1957:

Many times as a child I heard a story about Frank Colton, who, in the 1840's, operated a grist mill in Hamilton. He was reported to have carried large sums of money.

One morning, someone going into the mill ound Colton hanging from a beam. There was great excitement in this little village, or this was murder. Officers were unable o find any money or any clue to his ssailant.

Suspicion, however, pointed to one man, ut he was never convicted. One time fficers went to his house to question him, ut his wife said he was not home. When fficers asked to look in the rooms pstairs, the wife said there was nothing up there but dirt. Telling her they were to look for dirt, they proceeded upstairs and found the man hiding in a pile of old rags.

The murder was never solved, but the man whom everyone suspected suddenly began to prosper and became the wealthiest man in town.

Years later when William Renner was in his early teens, he found an old rusty can while playing in the mill. On opening it, he found it filled with money; the exact amount I never heard. For years after this murder the mill was supposed to be haunted.

The house in this story used to stand on the southwest corner of Church and Wayne Streets, where the Enco Station now stands.

Recollections

by Leola Alwood

Leola Alwood grew up on a farm east of Hamilton on Bellefountain Road just past Eddy Cemetery and near the Houlton Bridge.

She fondly remembers her childhood and the Houlton Bridge played a part in those memories. She and her brother would take walks past the Houlton School to the bridge. "We were proud to walk through it," she said, but heeded mother's warning of "no" to a walk through the bridge if a horse and buggy were coming the other way.

East of the covered bridge was a campground where the Houlton family held their annual reunion on the fourth day of September each year. She and her brother got to go to the reunions as neighbors.

Leola's grandfather, Theodore Hunt, (a Civil War Vet) was a stone mason. He did the stonework for the Houlton Bridge. Her father, Oren Aldrich, helped build the bridge.

Clark Alwood blacksmithed at Alvarado when he and Leola met. They were married in 1913. After a few years, they bought a farm and Clark started a sawmill there.

In 1942, Tom Day, overseer of the Holabird sawmill south of the cemetery, asked Clark and his son Elmer to come to work at the town sawmill. They accepted the offer and the family eventually moved into the house Russell Taylor (then mail carrier) found for them across from the lumberyard.

Clark did the sawing of trees. Clay Lemmon and Clark were sawing trees one day in 1948 and the limb of a falling tree struck Clark's face. He was treated at the Angola Hospital for cuts and a blood clot at the base of his brain. After the accident, he returned to the farm and he and his son again ran the home mill. He died in 1950.

Leola now resides in Angola next to her daughter.

Elmer Alwood hauled logs for the saw mill located south of the cemetery. His father, Clark Alwood, was head sawer.

The Stout Family

provided by Fern Duncan

Andrew J. Stout was born in Seneca County, Ohio and came to Hamilton in March, 1868, from DeKalb County, Indiana and established himself as a shoe and boot maker. He bought his leather directly from tanners.

In connection with his business, he was Postmaster for twelve years. He was also a veteranarian for many years. In 1917, he disposed of his businesses and retired in Ashley, Indiana.

Andrew's son George W. Stout, was born

at Fairfield Center in DeKalb county, August 19, 1866.

After graduation from high school in Hamilton, he took a business course at Oberlin College in Ohio and was a student at Tri-State College when illness of his father called him home. He then took over the duties of assistant Postmaster of Hamilton on July 1, 1914.

On July 25, 1888, Mr. Stout married Leona Dirrim. They had six children: Webster J., assistant Postmaster under his father at Hamilton; Letha who married Jesse Mountz; Walter, died July 20, 1904; Fernie (Duncan) and Waldo, who ran a barber shop on Wayne Street from 1930 to 1971.

The Renner Homestead.

The Renner Family

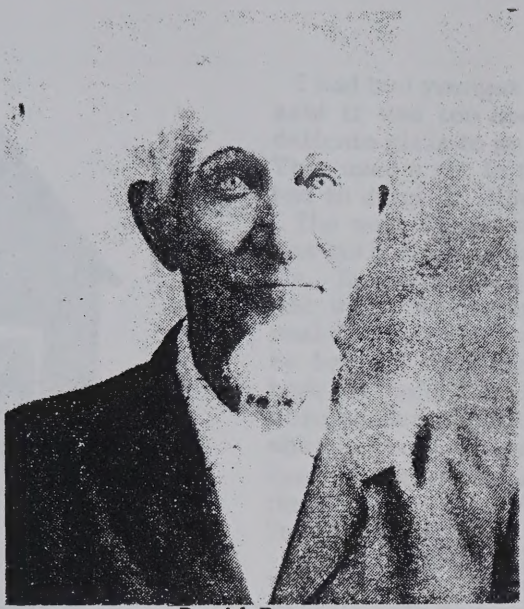
"Backward, turn backward, O, time in your flight; And make me a boy again just for tonight."

A poet wrote these words upon returning to his boyhood home. That might be the sentiments of any man who happened to have grown up in the rolling countryside around Ball Lake. The area is rustic and beautiful - farmland with lots of hills, woods and, of course, the lake. Much of the farmland is still owned by descendants of early settlers. One of the earlier buildings in Hamilton still stands (though barely) in an overgrown thicket in the Ball Lake area. It is the Renner homestead.

We first heard about the log house from Bob Hill, who grew up in the area. He has fond memories of old Ike Renner, the last inhabitant of the home. Laurence Crowl provided historical data about the Renner family and Alice Latier, a Renner descendant, provided photographs and information.

John and Julia Renner came to Steuben County from Pennsylvania in 1844. Their son, David, born in 1837, built the main log house after returning from Civil War duty.

"History of Northeast Indiana" records that David Renner attended school at District No. 7 in Otsego Township. "He worked out as a farm hand, and in August, 1861, enlisted in Company A of the Twenty-ninth Indiana Volunteer Infantry. In September he was transferred to Company E of the Ninth Indiana Infantry at LaPorte. The regiment to which he was transferred left at once for the West Virginia campaign, and except for a short time in a hospital at Louisville, Mr. Renner was with his command in all its engagements. While in Louisville and while convalescent he was assigned to duty as a cook. Several times he urged his officers to let him return to his old organization at the front, but he was told someone must cook and he had to stay. One day he and his comrades were paid off. It was the first money he had received since entering the army. His pay amounted to over $100. Most of it he sent to his wife; and then packed his belongings. A company was leaving the next day for the front, going to the same locality where his old company was stationed. When this organization left



David Renner.

the barracks, Mr. Renner went A.W.O.L. and traveled with them. The first day's journey was by train. On leaving the train the company was lined up at the mess shack, and the men counted before going in. The extra member was then discovered and the captain asked, "Have one of you men deserted from Louisville and come along with this company?" Mr. Renner stepped out and replied, "Yes, sir, I did." He then explained to the captain why he had come. "Well, I'll be damned," said the captain, "hundreds of men have deserted to get away from the firing line, but you are the first to desert to get back to it." Mr. Renner was then issued a pass back to his old company. This was only one instance of his "good soldierly qualities and his eagerness to be on the fighting line." He volunteered for other hazardous duty and was honorably discharged in September, 1865.

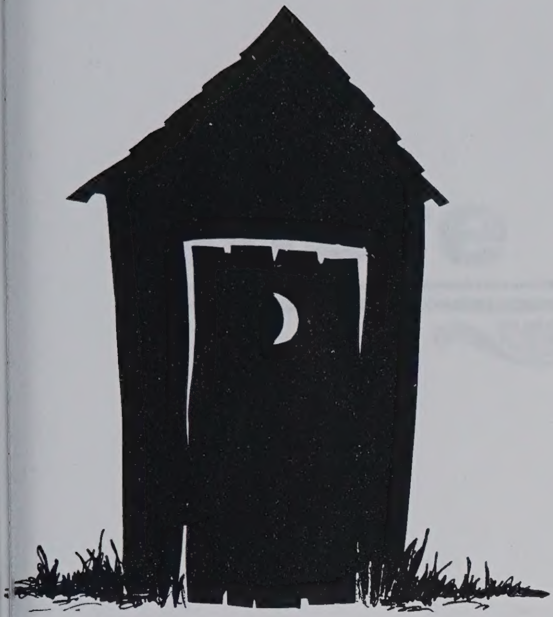
After the war, Renner returned home to his father's farm and his wife and two children. He and the former Ellen Ruthrauff, whom he married in 1857, purchased forty acres of land and built their log house.

Mrs. Renner died in 1912. Their children were: James, Frank, Edward, Henry, Nora, Jacob, and Isaac.

Henry's daughters, Alice Latier and Florence Husted, are the only Renner descendants in the area. Mrs. Latier remembers her grandfather, David Renner, very well. She said he was a hardworking, very independent man. He not only did all the farm chores, but ran the household too, because his wife spent many years bedfast with illness. His years in the army as a cook came in handy. It was not unusual to see this sturdy man donning an apron.

Mrs. Latier grew up on a farm near Barker's Chapel and Grandpa Renner would walk from the homestead near Ball Lake to their house. He usually refused offers of a ride, enjoying, rather, a peaceful walk. He was identifiable at great distance by his walking stance alone. Mrs. Latier said he always walked at a slow pace, his upper body leaning forward with his hands clasped restfully at his back. David Renner lived at the homestead quietly and uneventfully for over half a century.

David Renner takes time out from household chores to feed his pet sheep.



The W.C.

by Bob Swift

All plumbing in Hamilton was outdoors. I water was needed it was pumped at the wll.

The toilet sat back of the house at the ed of a path. In summer it was hot and selly so a sack of lime was kept there and pured down the hole to help keep down the oor. In winter it was a chilling eperience. Someone was always leaving the door open and it was a shock to brush of the snow and sit down. No effort was needed for you were shivering so violently tht it was the only energy needed.

Toilet paper was a mail order catalog hng by a string on a nail. Only the thin pinted pages were used. If a person used a lick paper it could break one's arm.

I had two younger sisters and my mother said it was too much of a shock for two delicate girls to go out back in the winter. They used a pot in the house and I usually had to dump it. How I hated girls.

The most deluxe toilet for miles around was built back of dad's store by the K of P's. It was a thing of beauty. The floor and walls were cement, the doors were real doors, not scrap boards held together by braces, the latches had knobs, not a hook to hold the door shut. The holes were sanded smooth and it had an asphalt shingled roof. It was painted snow white. Real toilet paper was purchased by the three stores from Fisher Brothers Paper Co. in Fort Wayne.

It was a double toilet for men and women. The men's side had two holes. The women's side had two adult holes and one for children.

Dad was a good sign painter so he lettered the doors, MEN and LADIES in neat letters.

Word got around so on Saturday night, there was a steady stream going through dad's store to use this marvel.

The first bathroom in town was in the home of C.B. Dirrim. He put a septic system in his back yard, drilled a well close to the house and created a windmill. He placed a horse tank in the attic so the system could operate by gravity. They always had to watch when the tank was filling so it wouldn't run over.

The flush tank was ceiling high with a long chain to flush it. The bath tub sat on lions claw legs.

Dad remodeled our house in 1927 and included a bathroom. He drilled a new well, had a water system installed and Nick Chard put in a septic system. The remodeling was completed by winter except the bathroom. Dad died before he had the pleasure of using it.

Downtown Loafers

by Bob Swift

hen weather was decent in winter there were always loafers in town. Average fams contained forty to eighty acres so thre were eight to ten times as many famers than there is now.

avorite loafing places were the barber shps, Wolf's and Ernie Maxwell's tobacco shp.

here were always big checker games gong on at Brown's Barber Shop. It was seious business for those old men and thy were proud of their playing ability.

At Wolf's they had a liars chair. It was a bi black leather chair and the one that tol the biggest whopper got to sit in it. Yo wouldn't believe the imagination of thse men. To sit in the liars chair was a great honor.

In summer all of the stores had loafers benches in front of the stores.

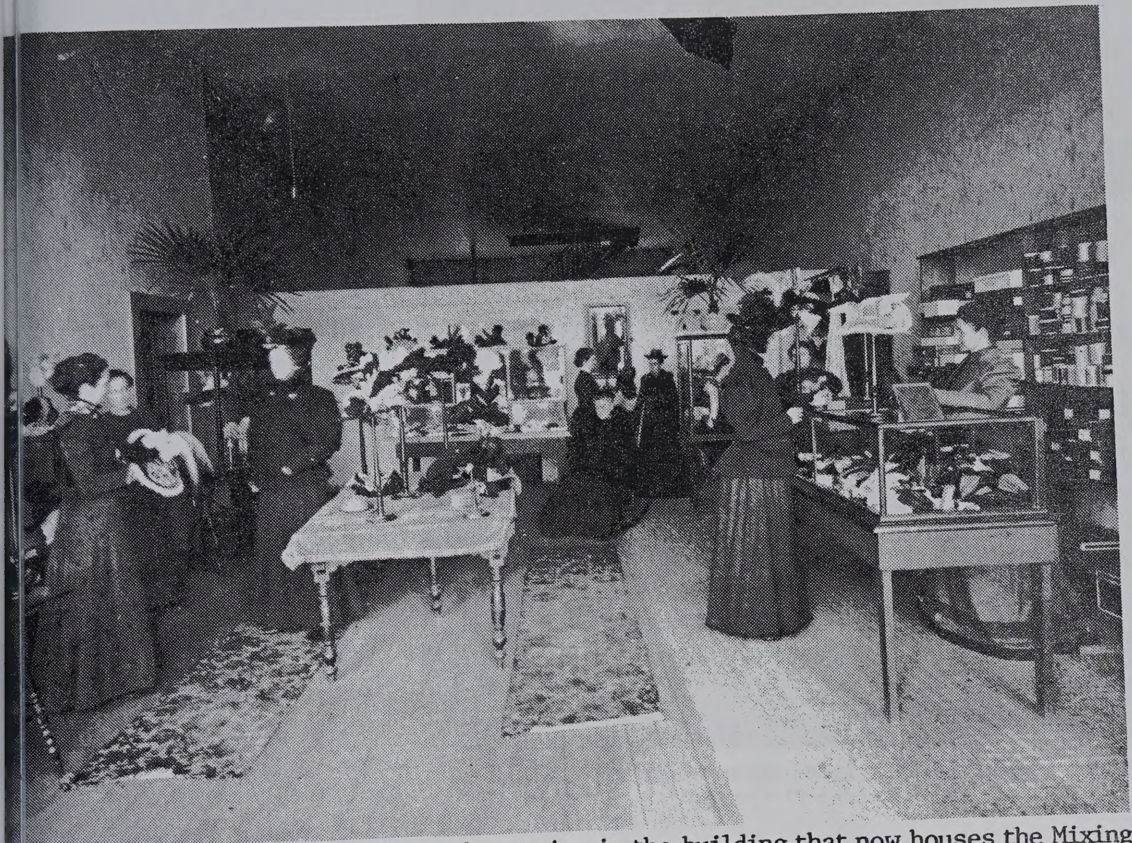
A favorite place for tobacco chewers was on the porch of the old hotel and the walk would be brown with tobacco juice. We went barefoot and they would try to hit our feet when we ran by. Mother would be disgusted if I came home with tobacco juice on my feet and overalls.

In the summer, mother had a standing order that we had to wash our feet before going to bed. A few times we tried to sneak into bed with dirty feet. She always made an inspection and if our feet were dirty she would crack us on the fanny and make us go out to the pump and wash them.

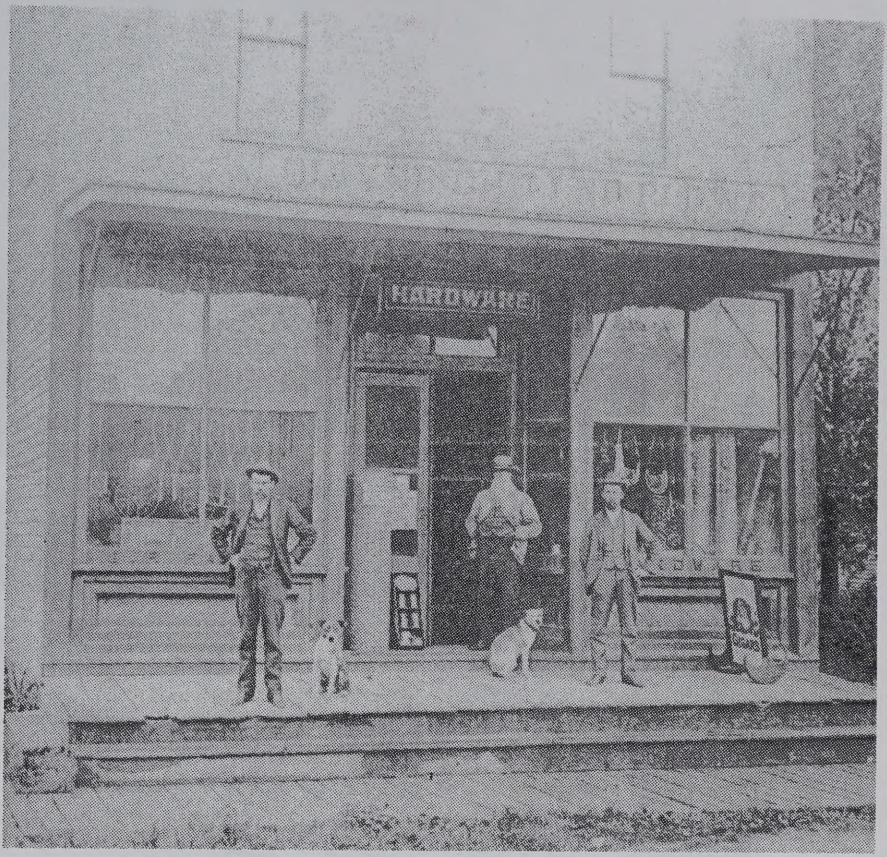
More Photos

Interior shot of the leader Store, early 1900's.

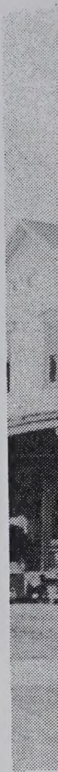
Interior of the Leader Store after it was rebuilt in 1912.



The Fee sister's hat shop was located upstairs in the building that now houses the Mixing Bowl.



The I.O.O.F. building in the early 1900's housed a hardware store



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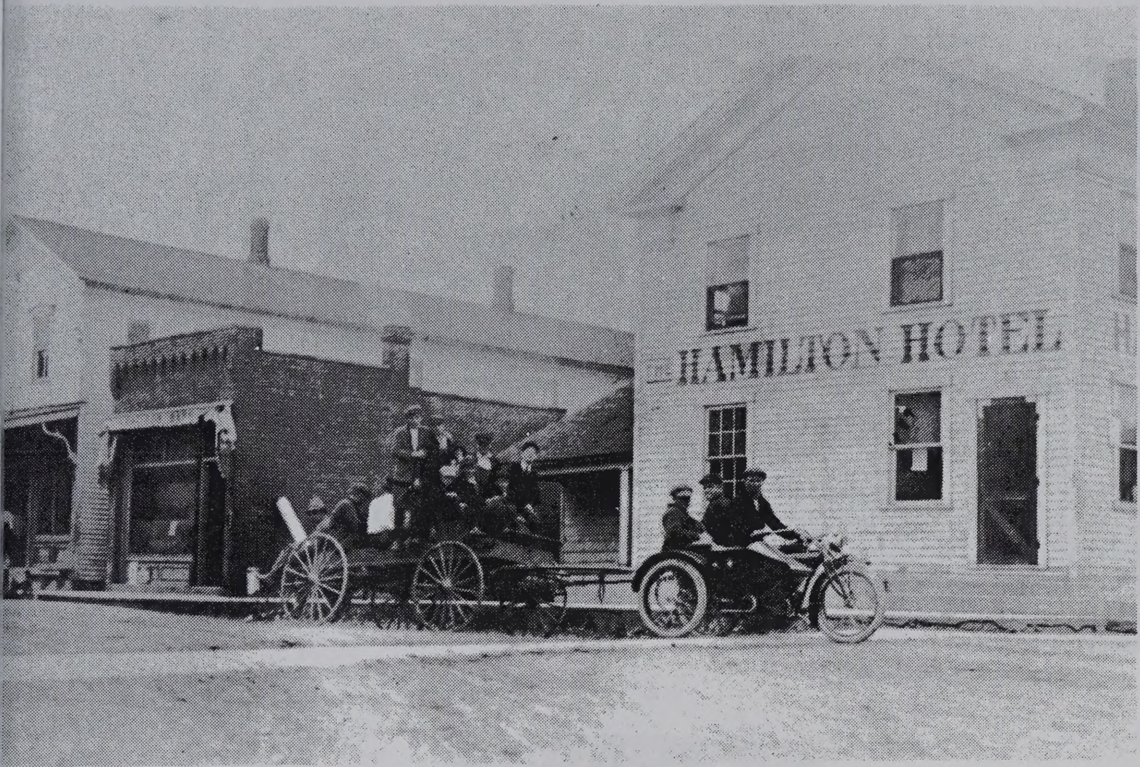
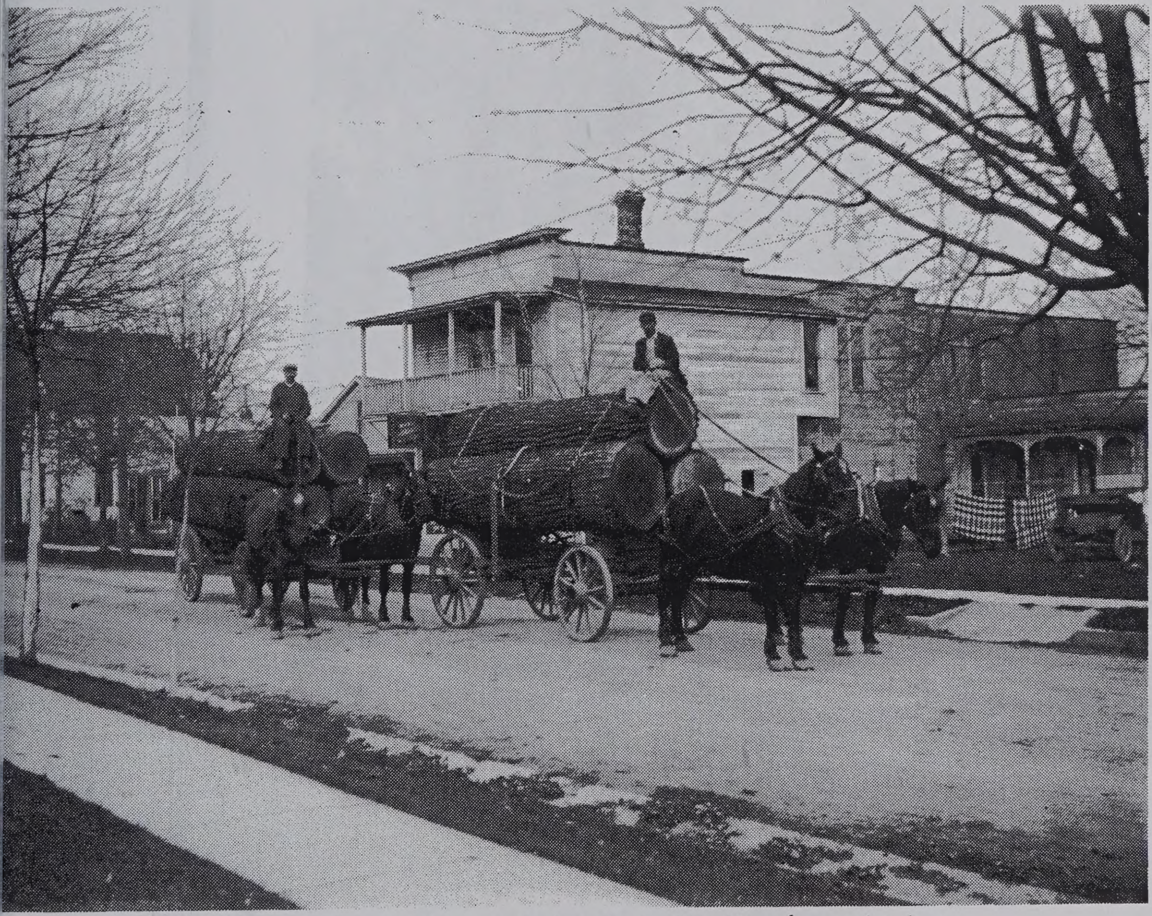
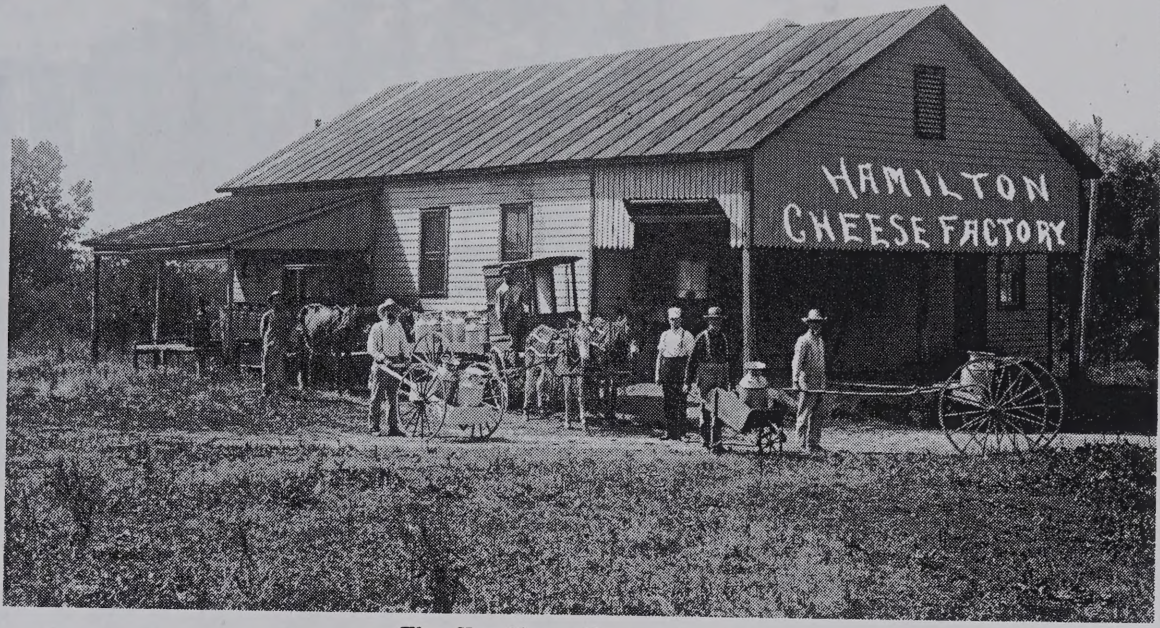


motorcycle drawn wagon load of Hamilton men pose on the west side of 427, south of main ntersection.

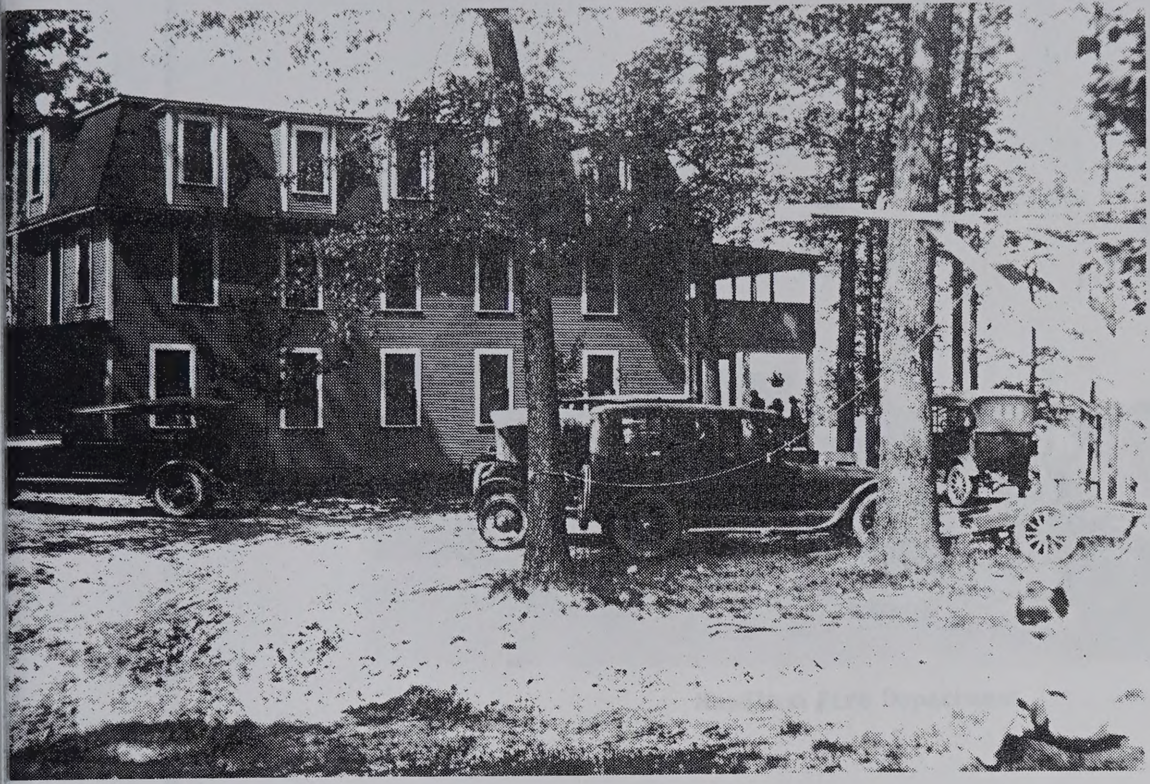


Logging was an important industry in Hamilton's early days.


HAMILTON
CHEESE FACTORY

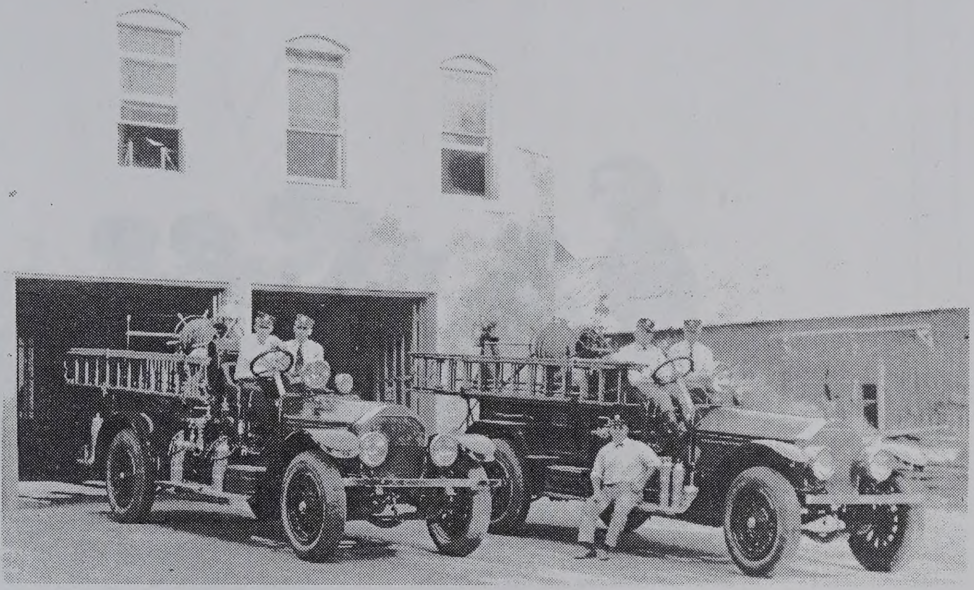
The Hamilton Cheese Factory.

The Perky Mill located east of Hamilton.

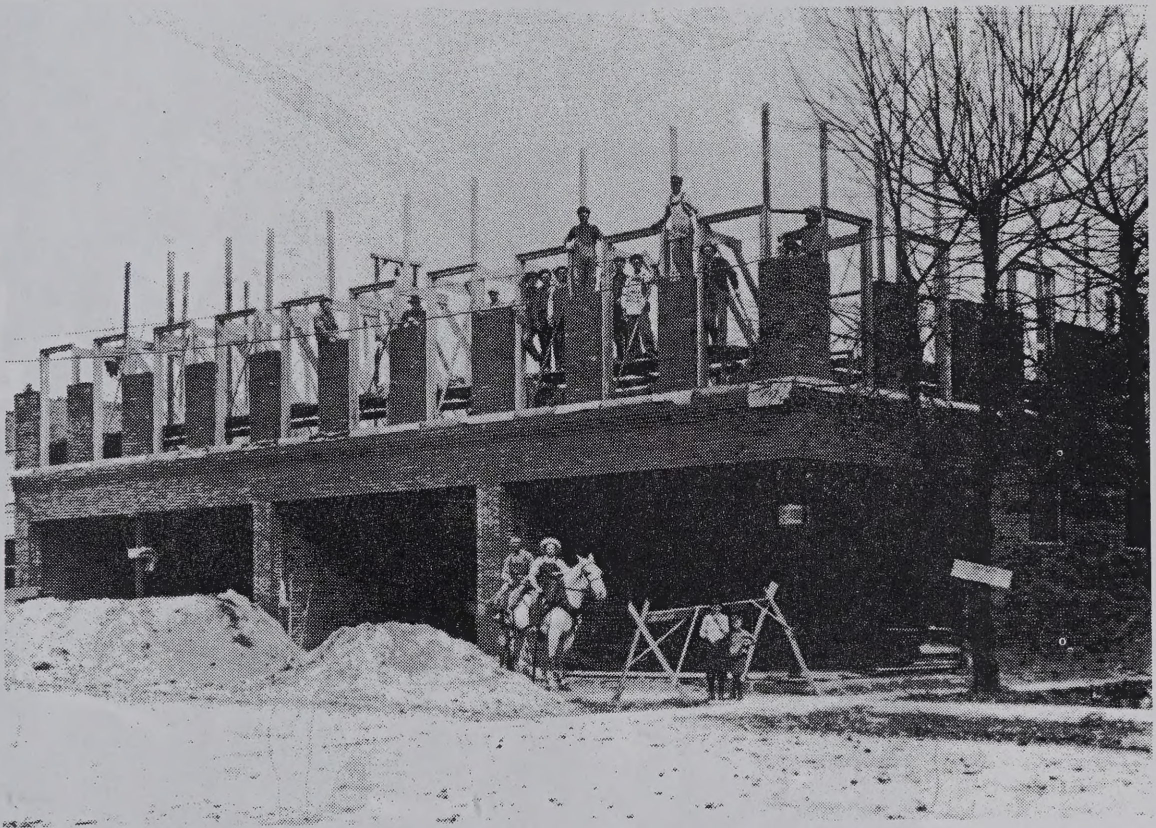


The Island Park Hotel.

Unknown woman pictured at Cold Springs.



Hamilton Fire Department



The Malone building under construction.

Girls basketball was very popular in the early 1900's. This photo of Hamilton High school's girls' team was taken before 1911. Members are (from left to right): Vera Dirrim, Alza Oberlin Day, Ethel Oberlin Hanes, Mable Chrow, Marie Lemmon Kepler, Eula Teegardin Sanxter, Grace Waterman Cameron and Georgia Todd Watkins.

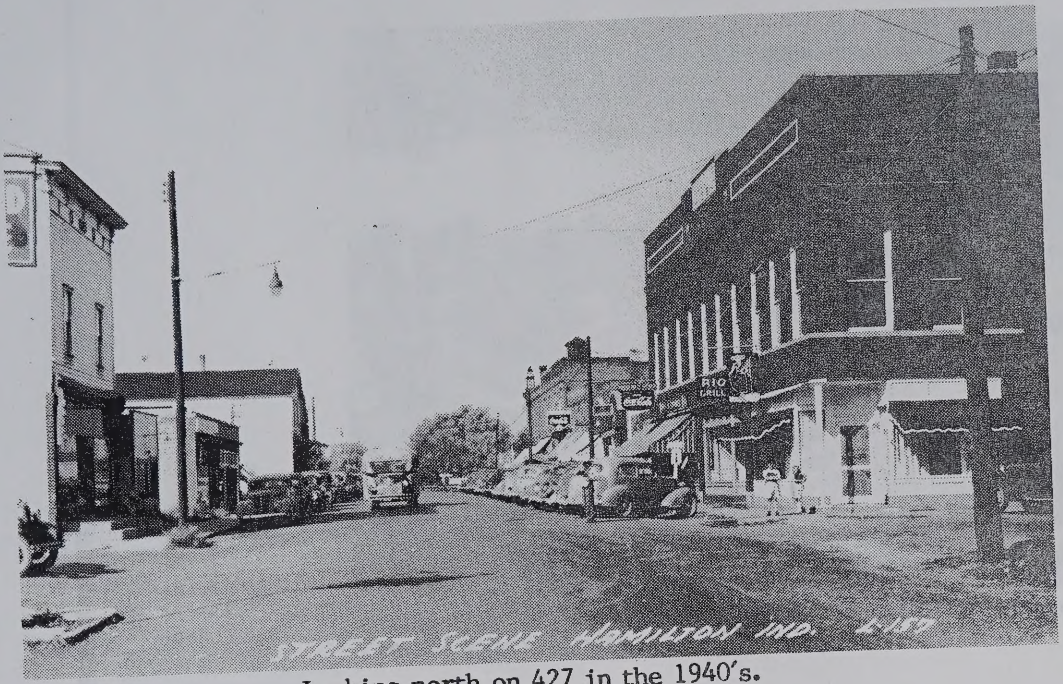
H.H.S.
22 - 23
H
H
H
H

Hamilton High school girls' basketball team of 1922-23 included, (from left to right) top row: Estert Hurraw, Bernice Zeigler Hamman, Viola Platt Lingle, Gertrude Learned Crain and Florence Kepler Bechtol. Front row: Viola Crowl Hagerty, Caroline Gates Fee and Cleo Dirrim Awald.

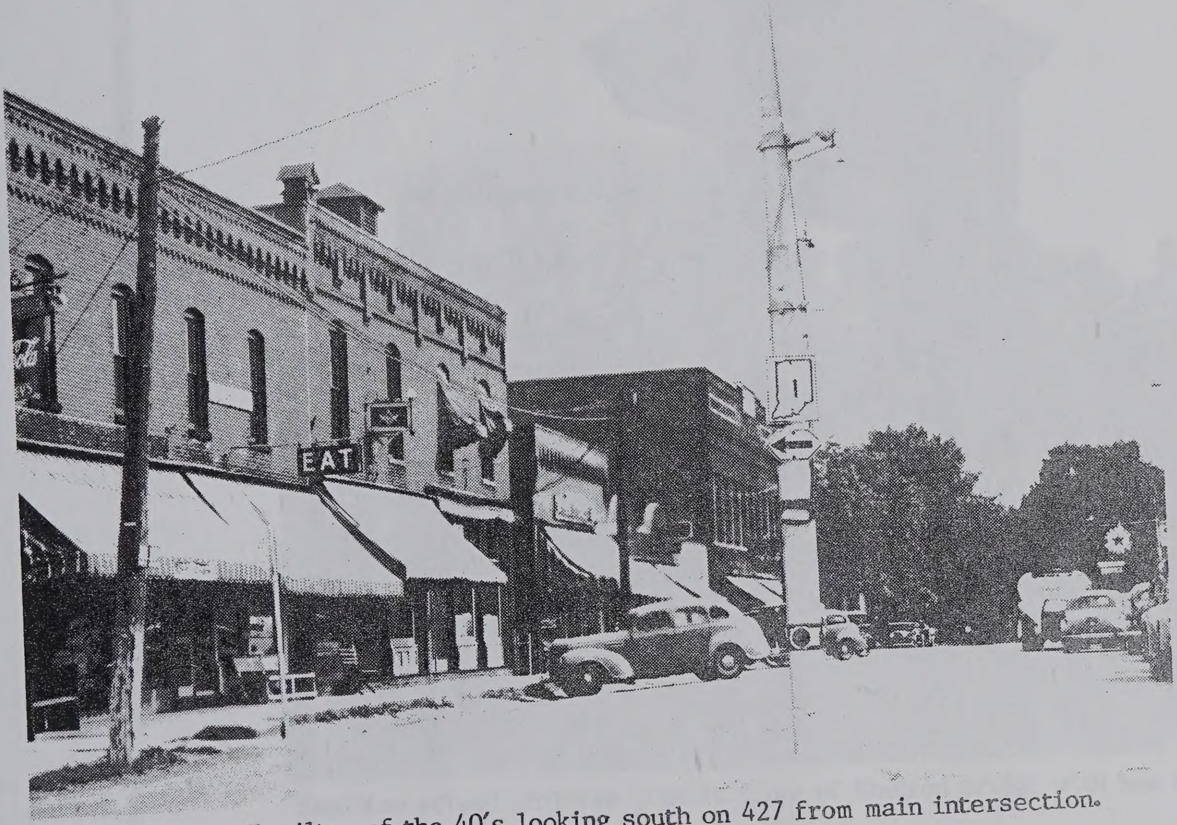
Posing beside Harley Griffith's house are the members of an early Hamilton High school boys basketball team. Members are, (from left to right), back row: Coaches Adolph Allomong and A.J. Sibel. Front row: Howard Beard, Clair Crowl, Hazen McClish, Walter Oberlin, Harold Watkins and Joe Sewell.

H.H.S
1908
H.H.S
'08
H.H.S
'08

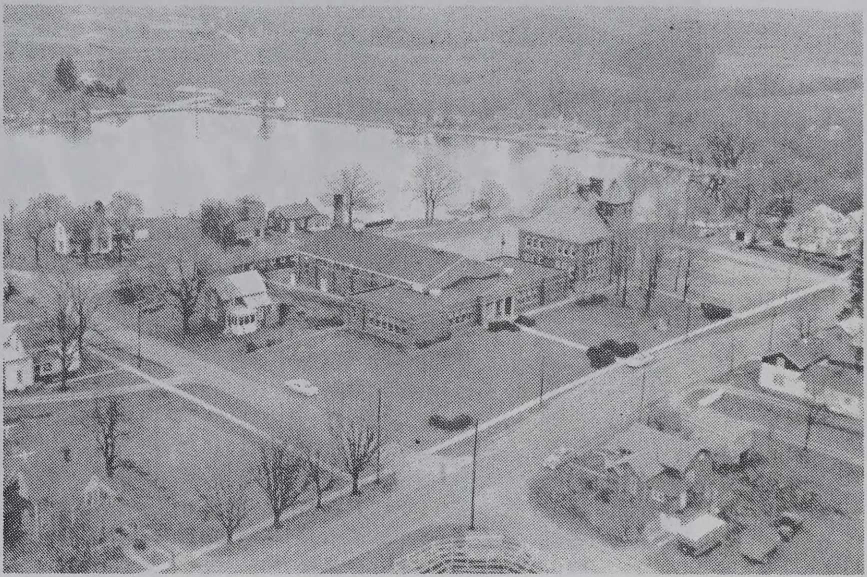
Hamilton's 1908 football team is pictured in front of school building. Members include, (from left to right) top row: Teacher (name unknown), Arthur Hagerty, Harold Watkins, Angus Cameron, Shirley Sanxter and Roscoe Watkins (principal). Second row: Clair Crowl, Wendell Scoll, Tip Dirrim, Sim Aldrich, Carl Chilcote, Harold Renner, and Samuel Zeigler.


STREET SCENE HAMILTON IND. L-157
RIO GRILL

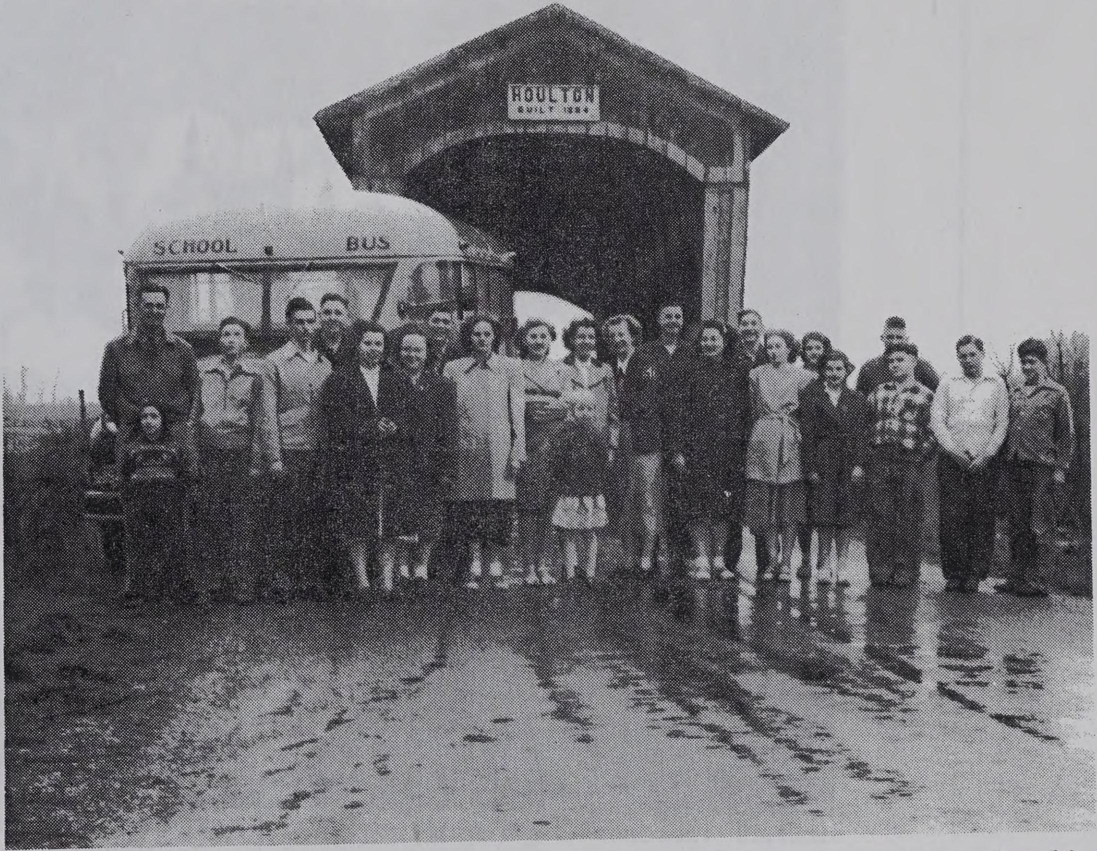
Looking north on 427 in the 1940's.



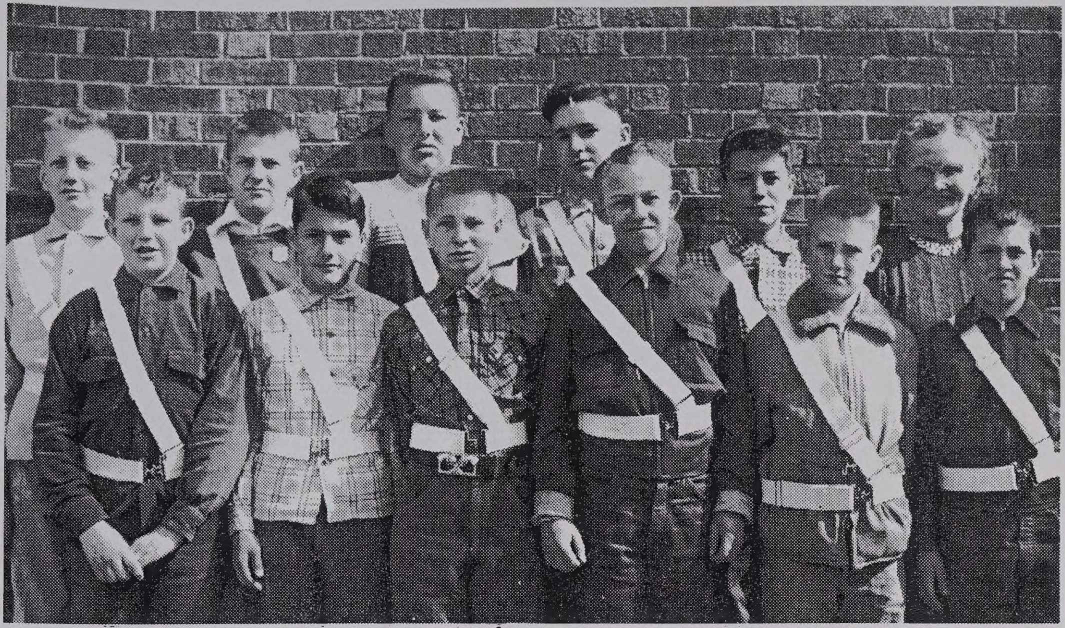
Downtown Hamilton of the 40's looking south on 427 from main intersection.



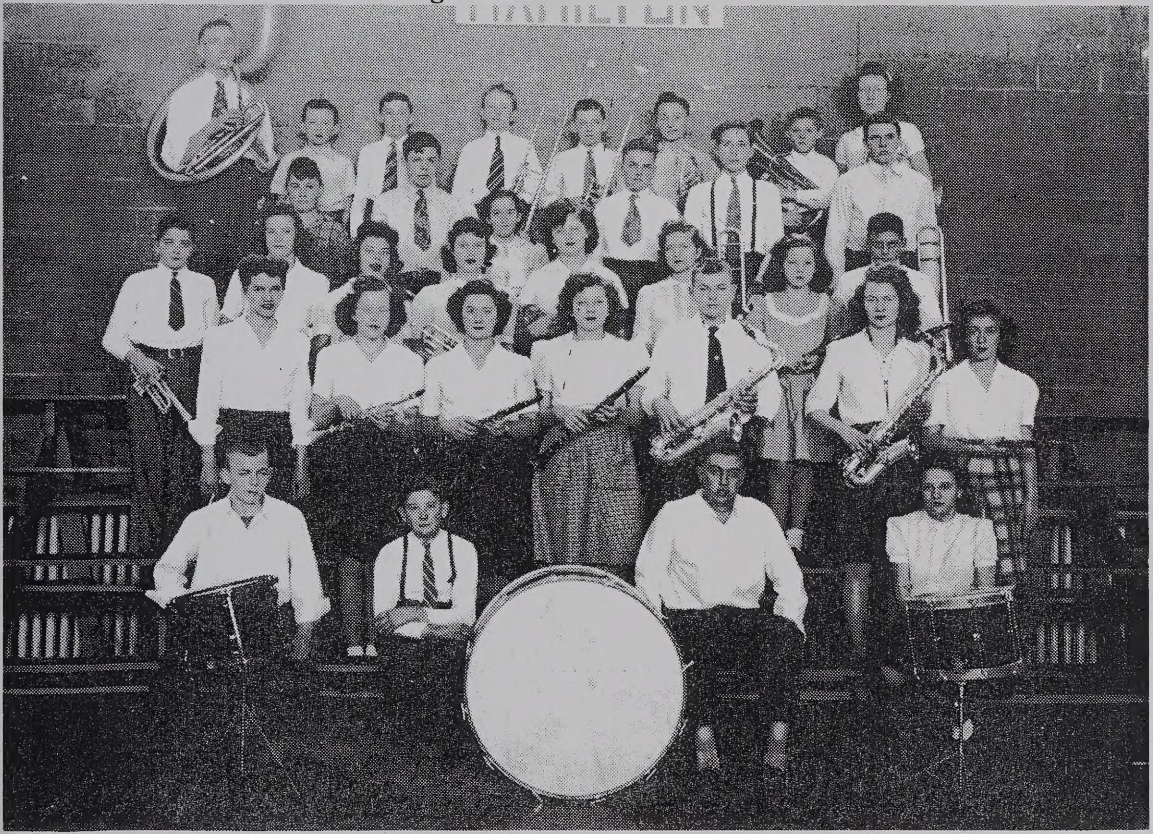
Aerial view of the old town school located where Suttons is now. The old gym still stands.


HOULTON
BUILT 1884
SCHOOL BUS

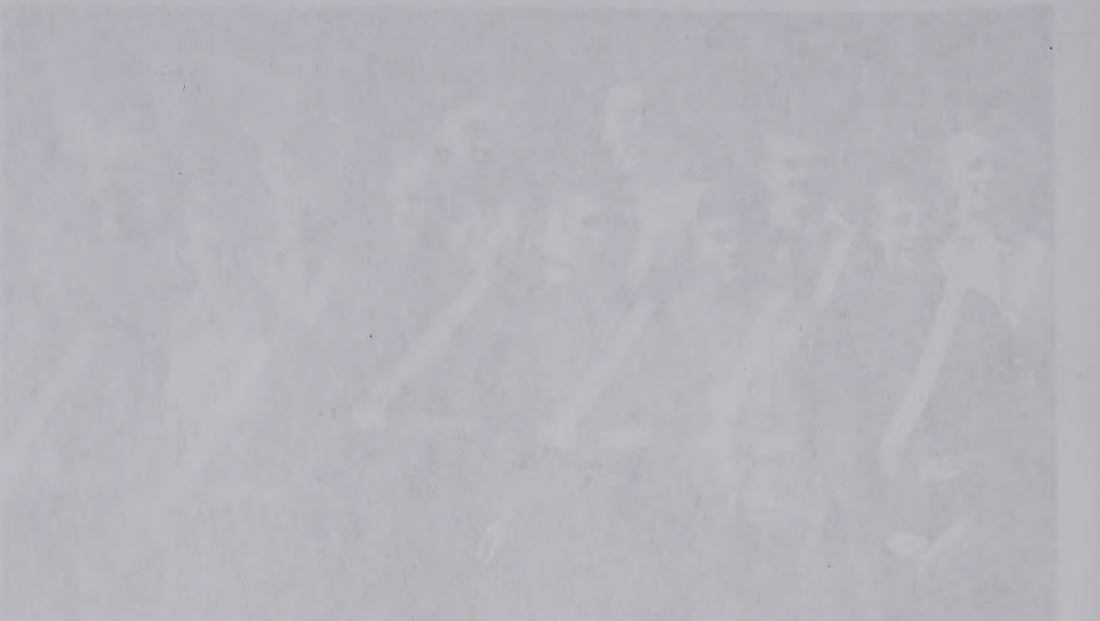
Hamilton school children pose in front of Houlton Bridge with bus driver, Donald Gnagy.



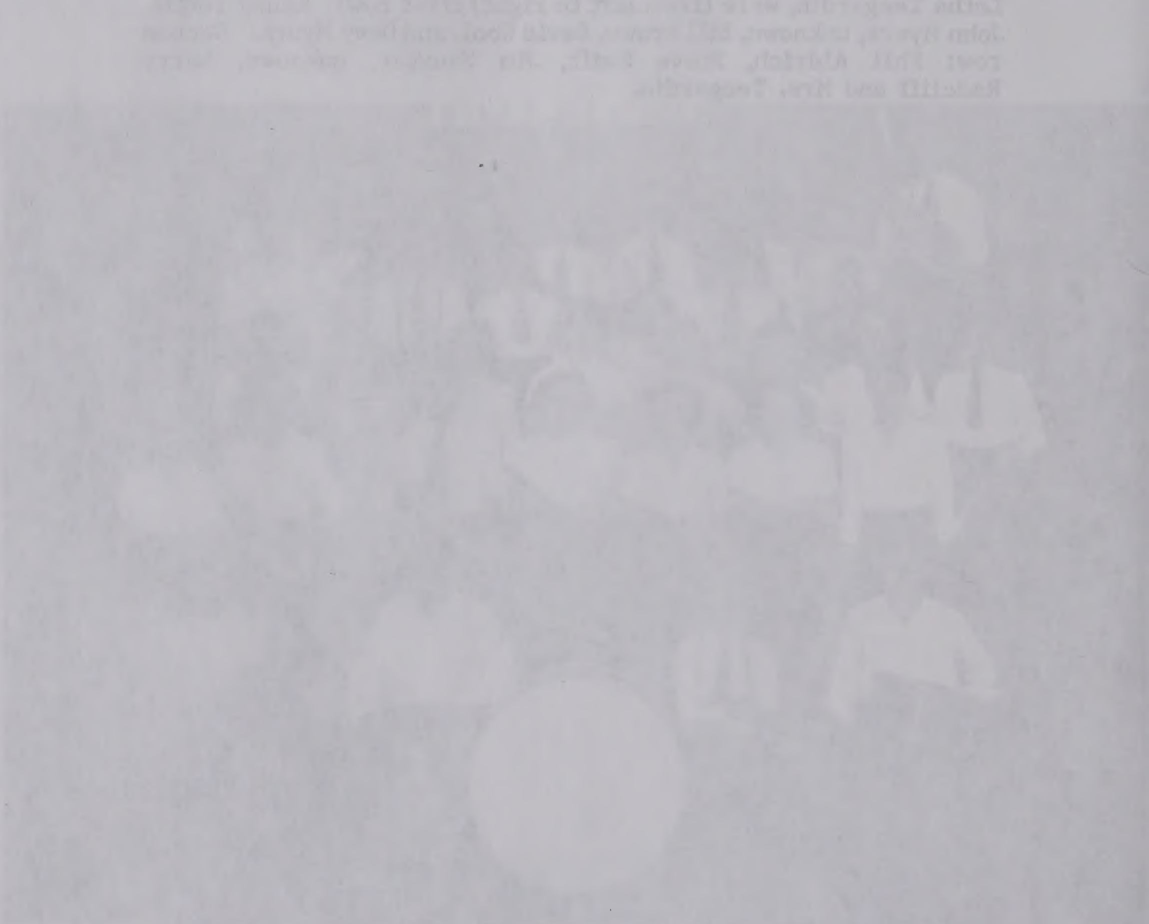
Safety patrol boys of the 1950's, under the supervision of teacher Letha Teegardin, were (from left to right) first row: Kenny Tuttle, John Myers, unknown, Bill Brown, David Cool, and Devy Myers. Second row: Phil Aldrich, Steve Swift, Jim Sanxter, unknown, Larry Radcliff and Mrs. Teegardin.



The Hamilton High school band of 1944-45 included, (from left to right) front row: Kenneth Taylor, Duane Oberlin, DeLos Penland and Imogene Sanxter. Second row: Sue Mace (instructor), Donna Haughey, Donna Oberlin, Lorinne Robinett, Norman Taylor, Bonnie Haughey and Pat Rholeder. Third row: Wendell Phillips, Twila Lautzenhiser, Ida Lou Simon, Dolores Harger, Merry Gessinger, Anna Mae Oberlin, Sharon Heath and Lyle Cary. Fourth row: Leon Teegardin, Ralph Anderson, Mary Haughey, Loren Calvin, Paul Benjamin and Robert Metz. Fifth row: Harold Douglas, Lynn Gnagy, Maurice Ferfuson, Max Gnagy, Donald Jennings, Arlo Musser, Arnold Nickols and June Mills.



Safety patrol boys of the 1940's, under the supervision of teacher Letha Teegarden, were (from left to right) first row: Danny Tingle, John Myers, unknown, Bill Brown, David Cool and Dewey Myers. Second row: Phil Aldrich, Steve Faith, Jim Vaughan, unknown, Jerry Radcliff and Mrs. Teegarden.



ne Hamilton High school band of 1940-41 included, (from left to right) first row: Kenneth ylor, Donna Oberlin, Helen Penland and Imogene Saunders. Second row: the Merve nstructor), Donna Vaughan, Donna Oberlin, Lorinne Robinson, Richard Tingle, Harold ughey and Pat Ehinderts. Third row: Wendell Phillips, Twila Wattenbarger, Ila Lou lson, Dolores Berger, Marry Gensinger, Anna Mae Oberlin, Eleanor Roush and Lyle Carr. ourth row: Leon Teegarden, Ralph Anderson, Mary Vaughan, Loren Griffin, Carl Bergman nd Robert Mutz. Fifth row: Ronald Douglas, Jean Kenny, Maurice Patterson, Max Shugh, ald Jennings, Arlo Hummer, Arnold Nichols and Rose Miller.

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